

# Burden Bearing

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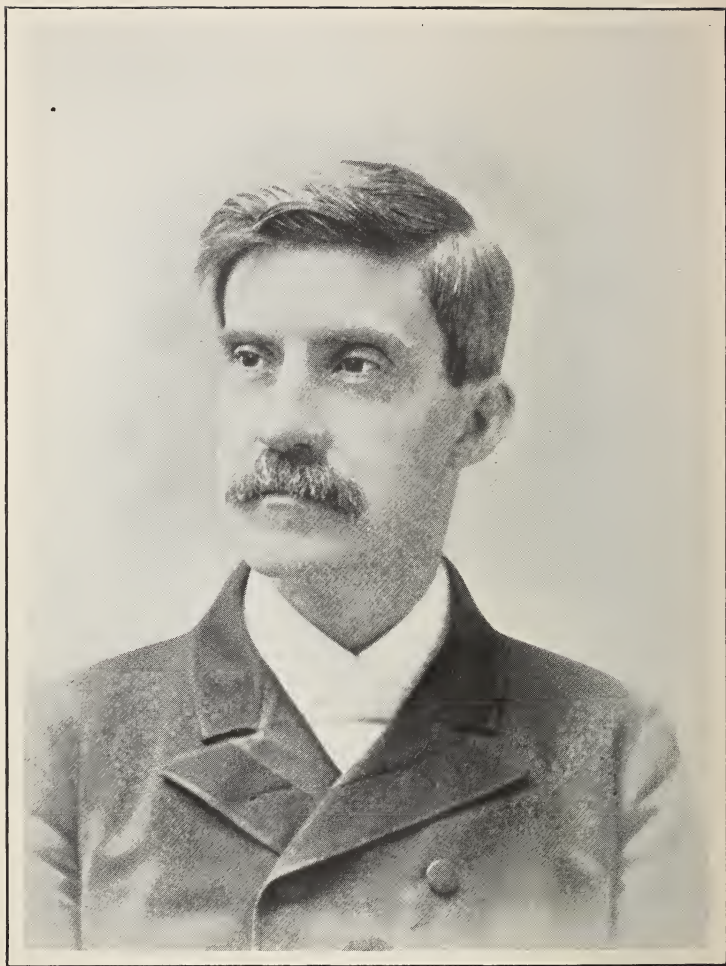
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John Rhey Thompson,

# Burden Bearing

and

## Other Sermons

By

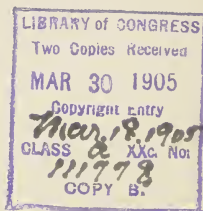
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## PREFATORY NOTE

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# BURDEN BEARING AND OTHER SERMONS

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## BURDEN BEARING

“Bear ye one another’s burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.”—Gal. 6. 2.

THE word “burdens” here is to be taken in a large, comprehensive sense. It includes everything that weighs a man down or handicaps him in the race of life, everything that dwarfs, or hinders, or harasses or obstructs him in coming to the maximum of his power, in realizing in the amplest sense the supreme spiritual ends of his being.

Innumerable almost are the burdens that men bear, and ever shifting and varying are the sources whence they arise. Many of these burdens spring from the conditions of our earth and time life, from the fact that we live a physical life, that we are now prisoned in the flesh, and that whatever of power or excellence or dignity we may here achieve, it is to be wrought out by the union of matter and of spirit.

These physical burdens are caused sometimes by the necessities of our situation, sometimes we inherit them, sometimes we bring them upon ourselves through ignorance, and sometimes they are self-imposed in consequence of our willfulness and culpableness. But whatever may be the source of our physical burdens, a weak body, a diseased body, a deformed body, a body feeble in its resisting and recuperating powers, a body anywhere short of perfect and spontaneous buoyant vigor is by just so much a subtraction from what we might be and do.

Then, there are the drag-weights that come to men and women in consequence of the hard and irreducible inequalities of life; for there are inequalities of life that are slight and reducible, and there are inequalities of life that are hard and irreducible.

There are the misadjustments, the inexperience, the mistakes of life that still further increase the number of our burdens and impediments. There are men who last week hammered out horseshoes on anvils that could have governed states; and I know one governor of a state that I am sure, in an ideal social and political system, would be nearer his proper place if he were hammering out horseshoes than governing men. There are men in the world with great big brains, full of noble, stirring thoughts, who are having a close fight for bread, raiment, and roof; and there are men with small, teacup-like heads that have nothing in them but a

few little lonesome ideas chasing each other around the spacious emptiness, who daily eat to satiety of the most luxurious food, of which they neither know whence it comes from or what it costs.

These are burdens. They may be unconscious burdens, they may be conscious burdens; but, whether the man at the anvil knows that he can govern a state or not, and whether the man in the executive chamber knows that he ought to be hammering horseshoes or not, consciously or unconsciously, the man that ought to be in his right place, and is actually in the wrong place, is weighed down, hampered, confined, dwarfed by the conditions from which, now, it is too late to escape.

And then there are the burdens which spring from the constitution of the household. The class, first, that spring from well-ordered households, from households in which love reigns supreme. There are the burdens that come with the rearing of children, where conscience, intelligence, and love are given to childhood in the vicarious principle of fatherhood and motherhood. But there are infelicitous domestic relations. There are great, pure, imaginative women who have lost forever the hopes of their girlhood and find themselves tied to brute beasts; and there are great, strong, noble men who are doomed to live all their lives long with stinging wasps.

There are the burdens, also, not to lengthen this

inventory, such as are described by the apostle in the verse immediately preceding the text, where he says: "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault (that is, a moral fault, not a mere mistake of judgment, but in some moral dereliction), ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted. Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ." This latter is the heaviest of all burdens—the burden of conscious guilt, of conscious moral disloyalty, of moral overthrow. The burdens of condition, the burdens of failure, the burdens of mistake, are light compared with the burdens of guilt; and there are many who are compelled to carry this burden.

And yet "burdens" is not, after all, the emphatic word in this text. The intensive, emphatic phrase is "one another's." It is not to be read, "Bear ye one another's *burdens*," so much as it is to be read, "Bear ye *one another's* burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ." The apostle Paul gives expression to the same truth in the first verse of the fifteenth chapter of Romans, where he says: "We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves"—and that is what we are all doing, pleasing ourselves; and yet the apostle announces that the very mission of strength is to mother weakness, that that to which strength is called is to carry weakness, and that we that have

named the name of Christ are not to please ourselves. Yet we have all planned our lives so as to please ourselves.

Now, how may we bear one another's burdens? There are some burdens that we may not bear; there are some griefs, as well as joys, with which a stranger intermeddleth not; there are wounds which bleed inwardly, and it is not for us in any exuberance of ill-regulated zeal to attempt to stanch these wounds. How do men bear one another's physical burdens? How do men, for example, who are lawyers, bear the physical burdens of hunchback lawyers, as I once studied lawyers in a courthouse bearing the burden of one who was a hunchback? By never referring to his deformity, by never handing him his cane, by avoiding everything of that kind. They were delicate; they were wise; they treated him as though he was six feet high, and stalwart and robust. That is the way they helped him to bear his physical infirmity. How do we bear the burdens of the invalid? By closing the door softly, by ascending the stairs quietly, by lowering the voice, by getting out of the street car and buying the choice fruit or the beautiful flower, by bringing her that which she will particularly enjoy, and not by talking to her about her sickness, not by talking to her about her possible speedy departure out of the body; but by so ordering our whole lives that she is blest in being an invalid, as she learns in her

spirit the lessons that we who are strong never learn until we are smitten.

And so, with all these burdens of men and women, there can be no sympathy where there is no love. First of all there must be love for men and women just as they are, just as we find them in this world about us, real, hearty love for them; and out of that love will come the insight of sympathy, and out of sympathy that is born of love, comes courtesy and tact and skill in spiritual ethics, and in spiritual medication. We need to know how to have our hot hearts glow in our faces. We need to know how to make the grasp of our hand magnetic, the look of our eye tender, the whole spirit of our life brotherly and helpful, and in so doing we fulfill the law of Christ.

It does not say "*a* law of Christ." It does not say "bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill *a* law of Christ," but it says, "and fulfill *the* law of Christ;" that is, comprehensively considered, the law of him who shadowed forth the infinite, the law of his life who is now with God and thinks it not robbery to be equal with him. The law of his whole being, and of the forces and resources of his being, was that he carried burdens, that he carried burdens when he need not have carried them, burdens that he took upon himself; not that he officially assumed them, not that he acted as though he were bearing them, not as though in a commercial transaction he agreed

to carry so many of them for such and such governmental results; but that he actually took upon him the sicknesses, the griefs, the toils, the cares, the burdens of men and women, and carried them in his very heart. That is the law of Christ. That interprets the significance of the incarnation.

On the basis of this brief exposition, I remark, first, that this is a world in which there are many burdens to be borne. How many handicapped souls there are in this world! How many heavily weighed souls there are here! You never can tell by looking at the outside of a house what is the nature of the family life within. It may look very peaceful, beautiful, and radiant, but within all is estrangement, alienation, bickerings, wrath. Days will pass when the father and mother, even in the presence of their children, do not recognize each other by look or voice. And so there are faces, like houses, that are misleading, faces steeled to indifference, and it is only the practiced eye that can see behind this well meant stoical hardness to the aching, lonely, heavy heart within. There are souls here this morning that reach out invisible hands to men and to God for help, for sympathy, for direction, for forgiveness, for something to buoy them up that they may escape from the sorrows of memory or the apprehensions of the future, and only they know that they are here who are bearing burdens for others in the spirit of Jesus Christ.



Would that there might be some word said; would that there might be something sung, would that there might be something in the atmosphere of the church, would that there might come from the invisible realm helpful and subtle influences that would bring peace to some burdened heart in this presence!

There are those who magnify their own burdens and nurse their own griefs, and do not even so much as look upon the burdens and griefs of others. Some men will say, "This doctrine of burden bearing is a doctrine that ought to be preached, but I can't take part in it. I have my own burdens to bear." But the man who says that is ignorant of the first principles of an ethical philosophy of life; and the Christian man who says that is ignorant of the first principles of the gospel of Christ. He needs to go back and learn the A B C's of Christ. He who has Christ's spirit and means to live a Christ life will not say that he must be excused from bearing the burdens of others because he has burdens of his own, for the philosophy of Christ is that they only shall be lightened in their burdens who help other people to carry theirs.

Have you ever tried it? It is hard work. Every thing that is worth much costs something, and in proportion to its value and preciousness is its costliness. Have you ever when you felt yourself heavily burdened, have you ever when it seemed to you



that the ground was giving way underneath you, have you ever when you were lonely and grief-stricken and weak in body, instead of sitting down and nursing your grief, nerved yourself to go to those that had greater griefs? Have you ever with weak body and sick heart and faint eyes gone to those that had sicker hearts, and fainter eyes, and helped them to carry their burdens? If you did, you need not be told that when the evening came your own were lighter. But they who nurse their own griefs and make a luxury of them and seek not those whose way in life is harder than their own, will have their own magnified until at last in a kind of religious luxury of despair or a luxury of religious despair, they will be of no use to the church, of no use to their families, and to the community, except to stand as awful warnings to the young of how religion, when abused, may warp and make bitter and acrid the whole character. The first principle of the religious life is that if we would have our burdens lightened we want to put our shoulders under the man's next to us.

The true test of the divineness of the church and the true measure of its spiritual power is to be found in its wealth or poverty in the matter of the spirit of burden bearing. We have great discussions in our time, and I think we are destined to have still noisier discussions, concerning this subject, namely, as to what are the tests of a true church.

We go to our Episcopalian brethren, and they tell us that the test of a true church is that you can trace your ordained ministers back through all the ages to the apostles. Of course, you know the conditions that our Roman Catholic brethren announce for the test of the true church. We go to our Presbyterian brethren and we find that their test is that one shall not go beyond the Westminster confession, as witness in a presbytery in Pennsylvania, a man did get beyond that, and, although he was a minister for twenty-five years and very useful, they tried him and put him out. Then we go to our Baptist brethren, and they tell us that the true test of a divine church is that persons shall be baptized by one way, namely, by immersion, and that the Lord's table shall be sacredly guarded from profane intrusion. There are Methodists who insist that the test is that we shall believe in instantaneous conversion, or entire sanctification. I tell you if the Lord Jesus Christ in flesh-form should walk down that aisle and into the altar, and should be asked the test of the genuineness of the church which he meant to found in the world, he would say, "I stood in the midst of the multitudes in Galilee and Judea, and if there were any guilty, my heart was open to them, however guilty they were. If there were any lonely I carried their burdens. If you carry men's burdens, this is one of my churches, and if you do not carry men's burdens, this is a religious lecturing

association. The true test of the genuineness of a church is that men and women in the church shall do in this world the work that Jesus Christ would do if he was here in person. If they do not do that, I care not who ordained them, I care not what venerable order laid hands upon them, I care not what may be their confession of faith, it is not the true church of God. I declare on the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ that where the spirit of Christ is there is the church of Christ. He who enters into the spirit of burden bearing will also enter into the spirit of Christ, and he will enter into the spirit of Christ only so far as he enters into the spirit of burden bearing.

Every man before me this morning has his own Christ, as every man before me has his own God. To some of you your Christ is the Christ of education. I mean the education of home and the early Sunday school, and those who molded your religious opinions in early life. To others your Christ is the Christ of the church, the Christ you have heard preached to you by doctrinal preachers or by preachers who established his divinity by proof texts from the Scriptures. There are others of you who have the Christ of the text. You can refer to texts in the New Testament to prove what he was and did at certain times and places. There are those of you who have a Christ of the imagination. Some of you have poetic temperaments, and you have a

Christ, neither of the text, nor of memory, or of theology, but of the imagination. Such a Christ has possibly never lived. There are others of you that have a theological Christ, that is, certain statements concerning his person you hold to be absolutely indispensable to a sound system of Christian divinity. Speculatively, I would agree with you, dogmatically I would accept your statements; but how many of you are there that have a living, present, personal Christ? How many are there of you here to-day in whose hearts and lives there has entered an actual Christ—not one of memory, not one of hope, not one of theology, not one of imagination, but one of life?

When the painter, Correggio, was a young man about nineteen years of age, he stood one day before one of the sublime masterpieces of Raphael. As he quietly drank in the silent power and beauty of the great picture, as flowers drink in the dews of heaven, the artistic consciousness awoke into life, and it is recorded of him that as he gazed, instead of being appalled by the great picture, he said, "I also am a painter." Now, you might take a man in whom there was no artistic consciousness before that picture, and he would neither interpret it or be apprehended by it. There were two things there, the picture of Raphael, the artistic genius in Correggio.

I take a man up before Jesus Christ and he sees

nothing—and why? Because there is no Christ *in him*; but as he himself becomes Christlike he will more and more stand before the picture, and at last say, “My Lord and my God!” But, first, there must be some of Christ in us before we can make out the Christ of the picture.

I said he *was* a burden bearer. Is he not now a burden bearer? Who told me to use the past tense? who authorized me to teach that once for three years, nearly two thousand years ago, on a small strip of land between the River Jordan and the Mediterranean Sea, he carried men’s burdens as a kind of a little episode in the history of the eternities, but that he does not always carry them? I am not authorized to say so, but I am authorized to say that Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and to-day and forever; I am authorized to say that he carries burdens this morning; I am authorized to say that it was not an episode in the divine life that he came hither to help men, but that it is the office and function, yea, that it is the supreme impulse and passion of Divinity forever and forever to carry burdens; that love in God like love in men means one thing only—the power to suffer for the beloved; that our Father in heaven carries our guilt, our ignorance, our poverty, and struggle, and sorrow, and pain, and always has, as his Son did in Galilee two thousand years ago.

There is nothing finer, nothing more exquisite,

nothing more irresistibly touching, nothing more unspeakably pathetic in all the writings of the great genius of Scottish fiction than his memorable account of the journey from Edinburgh to London of Jeanie Deans, and of her pleading before the great queen for the life of her guilty and condemned sister Effie. All the way from the Scotch to the English capital, goes the plain, homely, brave, duty-loving, simple-hearted Scotch girl, that never had a doubt, as we moderns call it; that never knew anything but just a few plain, rugged duties each day, and could not be seduced from the path of duty as her sister was, and stands before the powerful queen, and pleads for her sister. "O, madam," she says, "if ever ye ken'd what it was to sorrow for and with a sinning and a suffering creature, whose mind is sae tossed that she can be neither ca'd fit to live or die, have some compassion on our misery! Save an honest house from dishonor, and an unhappy girl, not eighteen years of age, from an early and dreadful death! Alas! it is not when we sleep soft and wake merrily ourselves that we think on other people's sufferings. Our hearts are waxed light within us then, and we are for righting our ain wrangs and fighting our ain battles. But when the hour of trouble comes to the mind or to the body—and seldom may it visit your leddyship—and when the hour of death comes—that comes to high and low—lang and late may it be yours—O, my leddy, then it

isna what we hae dune for oursells, but what we hae dune for others, that we think on maist pleasantly."

The Scotch lassie was right, and at the last solemn hour of human life only two thoughts will remain to comfort us: the thought of the burdens we have borne, of the heavy hearts we have lightened, of the lonely hearts we have cheered, and the wounded hearts we have healed; the other thought, that we are going to the high, serene, open, and perfect companionship of Him who carries all our burdens, by whose stripes we are healed, and through whose chastisement we are now entering into the eternal peace. When we are dying, backward glancing, we will see the men we have helped to live; forward looking, we will see the Christ who helped us to live. So may we live, and so, please God, may we die!



## THE NECESSITY OF PATIENCE

“For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise.”—Heb. 10. 36.

ALL high and royal states of soul, all fine and precious spiritual experiences, are incapable of precise verbal definition. Never until speech shall become as subtle and as flexible as thought and emotion, will it be possible to construct statements perfectly bodying forth the quick, deep, delicate, glancing life and kaleidoscopic moods of the spirit of man. What is worship? What is truth? What is love? What is beauty? What is eloquence? One may tell what worship does, one may point out what love suffers, one may describe what eloquence accomplishes—but what *is* eloquence? What *is* love? What is the high commerce of the soul with God called worship? So is it with patience; we all know what it is, but it is difficult to take that knowledge out of the realm of spiritual consciousness, and put it into words and sentences. Patience is not, as some people are wont to suppose, a celestial preparation or mixture brought hither by angels or other celestial beings, and introduced into the soul of man as medicine is introduced into his body. Patience is not something outside of man and foreign to him,



manufactured elsewhere to order, and then introduced into the nature or essence of his spirit. Patience is not an evanescent emotion; it is not an intellectual faculty like memory, or imagination, or perception; it is a fixed habit, a continued state of the soul, in view of certain conditions. It is an evidence of growth, a sign of self-mastery and maturity, an infallible token of advancing civilization. Savages and children are impatient. The savage must have his will accomplished immediately; he will not brook any delay; he must have his desires fulfilled at once. And so our children want no deferred pleasures. A child is unwilling to wait until next week for its joy. It will stamp its little foot or cry petulantly to have the promised gift or pleasure to-day. But growing men, maturing men, civilized men, are content to wait through long periods of time for results. They do not expect fruition instantly to follow aspiration, or fulfillment to chase eagerly the steps of desire.

It is almost impossible to compress into words, hard, stiff, unelastic, all that we mean by the great and noble quality of patience; but I venture this as an approximate and yet inadequate definition; proper exertion having been put forth in any realm of human activity, patience is the power of the soul quietly and hopefully to wait for the appropriate results. Patience does not demand fruit before its time; patience does not demand fruit in the seed;

patience does not demand fruit in the germinating state, or in the sprouting period, or in the blossoming time; it is content to wait until the fruit stage for fruit—and the power to do that is patience, the power to do it quietly and hopefully is the highest type of patience.

Christian patience, so far as it is separable from the general quality of patience, is the power of the soul, having put forth in the realm of spiritual life proper exertion, quietly and hopefully to wait for appropriate spiritual results.

The subject of the text is the necessity of patience in the Christian life. What is the Christian life? What do we set out to do when we become Christians? Not to get a stock of opinions; not to become correct thinkers on theological and philosophical problems; not to avoid guilt merely; not to escape punishment only; not at last to reap a blissful heaven. It is not to be denied that the natural outcome, the legitimate results of a Christian life will include many of these things. Earnest Christian living will always lead to right practical opinions; soundness of heart is closely related to clearness of vision; we do get rid of the sense of guilt in the Christian life; we do avoid many natural penalties of evil-doing, by turning away from evil, and we shall at last, through the good will of our God, escape the corruption that is in the world through the flesh, and have ministered unto us an

abundant entrance into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. But primarily, we do not begin a Christian life for this purpose. We aim at the construction of a character, and of a character of a certain sort, after a well established type, standard, or model. We do not begin the Christian life to construct a character after the Stoic, Epicurean, or Hindu type; not merely a character, but a character after the fashion and model of Jesus Christ. The first and chief work of the Christian life is the construction of that kind of a character; and that means freedom from guilt, that means heaven, that means peace, that means power. We do not aim at a single moral disposition, at a single gracious quality. Reverence is not enough; we must be honest as well as reverent. Purity is not enough; we must not only have a soul cleansed from evil, but *established* in goodness. Self-sacrifice is not enough; self-sacrifice without the inspiration of love is hard, frigid, austere, repellent; love must be the soul of self-sacrifice, its vital quickening power, so that at last we shall come to know what is the joy, as well as the duty, of self-renunciation.

It is contemplated also in the Christian life that we should have these qualities in great abundance; that these dispositions should be in us in richness and fullness and power. The fruit grower is anxious not only for the quality, but the quantity of his fruit. If a man is engaged in raising apples, he not

only wants pippins, and good pippins, but he wants a *great many* good pippins; if they be Rhode Island greenings, he not only wants good greenings, but he wants a *great many* good Rhode Island greenings. It is not a question only of quality, but it is a question of a great quantity of a good quality. So it is in the Christian life. What did our Master say? "Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit;" and the most of us are content occasionally to find a single scrawny apple on the boughs instead of gathering a great harvest. "Ye shall be my disciples," he says again, "if ye bear much fruit." The fruit of the spirit, love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, and meekness, is what he refers to, and of this we are to have not a little, but much. Love, not a little, but much of it; joy, not a little, but a great deal of it; peace, not a little, but a great deal of it; long-suffering, not a little, but a great deal. It is to this fullness, fruitfulness, and richness of moral disposition that we are called in the Christian life.

The Christian life must also be so inspired, and the Christian character so constructed, as that it will be radiant, winsome, attractive, beautiful. Our Lord Jesus, the model and type after which we build our life, was in his moral dispositions gracious and winning. He was the chief among ten thousand, and the one altogether lovely. His moral dispositions were of such a peculiar character that he won

men in his own time, and by them he is winning men now. Jesus wins more men for the church than the church wins men for Jesus. The church is militant, vulnerable, attackable, but he is not; and as he by his gracious and winsome moral dispositions drew those who were guilty, care-worn, grief-laden, wretched, and vile to him, so we must not be content with virtue of an austere, rugged, or formal type only; we must have a beautiful, radiant, attractive moral disposition.

The Christian life has its graces, and these graces are the delicate drapery of beauty thrown round its sterling virtues. "He that showeth mercy, with cheerfulness;" there are those who show mercy, but they do it hardly, dismally, reluctantly; but we are not merely to show mercy, we are to show mercy with cheerfulness. "Serve the Lord with gladness;" and most people do not do it at all. We are not only commanded to serve the Lord, but to serve him in a certain way; namely, with gladness. Take another passage: "Speaking the truth in love;" many people speak it in anger; many people speak it with intolerance, with pride, with hate, but we are to speak it in love. "Every man, according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give, not grudgingly nor of necessity, for God loveth a cheerful giver." I have known many good men who were large givers, but I have wished sometimes that I might have been with them when they

began to give, and impressed this passage upon them, for though they have accomplished much good, they have not learned how to give cheerfully. Five thousand dollars is always worth ten thousand dollars if a man's eye beams and his face shines when he gives it. God loves a cheerful giver. So, scattered all through the Bible, and especially in the New Testament, are these little hints and suggestions that we are not to be content with a bare Alpine height of sturdy, rugged virtue, but that, covering the strong granite, are to be seen blossoming, climbing plants, brilliant with beauty when the sunlight strikes them in the morning.

Do we need patience? Do we need patience to build such characters, to live this high, triumphant life? Consider the largeness, the complexity, and completeness of the idea of the Christian life. It includes the opening up and the development of all spiritual capacity. It is easy—that is, it is comparatively easy—it is merely a question of energy and muscle, to plane a soft pine board with the grain. I could almost do it myself. A sharp plane, a soft pine board, working with the grain, and almost anybody could plane it. But to carve elegant designs in hardwood, ebony, or mahogany, takes time and patience. Well, now, this work of developing Christian dispositions sometimes is not planing a pine board with the grain, it is working against the grain. This building up of a Christian

character and living a Christian life is a complex work, and the figures are to be delicately shaped and exquisitely formed; it takes time, and it cannot be done in a day, much less on a Sunday morning, in an hour and a half. Did you ever see a boy making a windmill? For the boy it is a complex piece of work; but it is exceedingly simple alongside of one of the engines of the Bristol or the Providence, of the Fall River Line. I stand in perfect mental confusion in the presence of such a machine as that, or of one of those great Hoe printing presses, with its rods and pistons, its levers and cogs and wheels, which I do not understand at all. Recently, when I was standing in the presence of one of them, a friend asked me what was greater than a machine like that. I ventured to reply that the man who made it was greater. There is something more complex than any machine, and that is the spirit of a man; the right ordering of all its dispositions; the bringing into the realm of obedience to the Master, Christ, of all its powers, loves, ambitions, and hopes, is a complex work, and it requires patience, time, the power to wait.

Do we need patience? Mark the fineness, the delicacy, the exquisite grace and beauty of the work that is to be done in us. Fine work of whatever sort, delicate work, work in subtle lines of beauty, work involving rare and consummate skill, necessarily involves patience. Have you ever visited a



great glass factory? They make window panes, common, ordinary window glass, very rapidly. The dextrous workman finishes them with a rapidity which will surprise you if you have never visited such a place before. But workers in glass do something else besides making ordinary window panes. They sometimes make lenses for telescopes, and it takes years to get that kind of glass ready, sometimes many years. They have to cleanse it, polish it, get it to a certain degree of fineness, reduce it to a definite form, and remove all trace of impurity from it. And it takes many workmen to manufacture the lenses needed for such a telescope as that of the Lick Observatory, or that of Lord Rosse. But when they are made you can see more with them. You cannot see much through an ordinary window glass; you can only see on a level with your eyes, you can see the street, or the dust in the street, or the houses on the other side of the street, or the butterfly and peacock pageantry that sometimes passes by. But you can see mighty things through the lenses of the telescope; you can look far into the mysteries above us; you can see world on world, star on star, and sun on sun; you can see a great deal more through that kind of glass than any cheap, common, quickly made glass. Some of you have only common window glass to look through; you do not see anything except horizontally and on a level with your eyes; you can see the street, its traffic, its



wagons, its glitter and show, its dust, but you have not had the lenses of your soul polished up to the point where you can see the hidden worlds above and around us.

I never talked with this glass that is found in these telescopes; I never had a conversation with it, but I suppose, it would complain greatly about its own process of development; if it could speak, I have no doubt it would object seriously to the manipulations and the polishings necessary to make it pure. So men and women are impatient, fitful, murmuring, and fretful, when God would polish them and refine them so that they could see above their heads as well as on a level with their eyes. A good glass-blower makes an ordinary tumbler in a very short time; it generally requires the boy to be quickly ready to take them away and to put them into the cooling pan as fast as he shapes them. But when he makes a fine, fragile, delicate glass, on which the engraver is to write the name of a loved one, he is patient and slow. When God writes his name on our spirits, they must be brought to the proper degree of consistency, and we need patience in the previous stages as well as during the time this Engraver is actually writing his name. It depends upon what kind of work you are going to do whether you can do it quickly or not; if it is fine, delicate, and precious work, you will have need of patience.

The spirituality and the individuality of this work necessitates patience. It was a comparatively easy task for England to acquire East Indian possessions; it was not a great feat for France to annex Tunis; it may not be a great feat for her to acquire Tonquin. It is not a difficult work to bring under a central government an outlying province; but it is a difficult and complex work, requiring time and great skill, to take the Hindus and make Englishmen out of them; to take those Moslems and give them the thoughts of Frenchmen, or to take an outlying foreign province and thoroughly incorporate it into the life of a nation. It is an easy task to take a city if you have battering rams enough; but it is a hard task really to take the men of the city after the walls are down. The war of bullets is always preceded and followed by the war of ideas, and you can fire bullets into men faster than ideas always. There is only one way to put ideas into a man, and that is by patience.

The Christian life is of that type; it is not a mere annexation by superior force; it is the free, ethical union of our spirits with the Divine Spirit in an actual and loving fellowship; our real participation in the Divine Life. That takes a long time, for God will not constrain any will; God will not coerce any heart, anywhere, at any time.

It is an invisible work. In the realm of matter; in the realm of our practical, secular, and temporal

relations, most of our work is visible, ascertainable, measurable. If I am leveling a hill, I can tell how I get on with it, because I know how much I have removed, and how much remains to be carried away. If a man is felling a forest, he can measure and ascertain every day how fast he is getting on with his work. If a man is draining a swamp, he can see how he is getting on with his work. If a man is building a house, he can tell when he has finished the first story, or the second story. If a man is acquiring an estate, he can ascertain just how rapidly he adds to his land by looking upon acres themselves, or he can go to the courthouse and look at his deeds. If a man is amassing a fortune, and he adds \$50,000 or \$100,000 to it, there is something realizable or palpable in the shape of gold or checks or mortgages, or bonds to show its increase. If a man is a growing physician, there is outside and palpable evidence that his practice is enlarging. Now, in the realm of the spirit, in the realm of worship and reverence and communion with the divine; in the realm of obedience to an invisible God; in the realm of love, of holiness, of patience, of justice, of long-suffering, the work is all invisible. It is not measurable by the outside, the external; it is not ascertainable by any visible or material test; it is an invisible work, and, therefore, it requires patience.

It requires patience, because it is permanent and

lasting. In the mining towns of the West they throw up their rude shanties in a few weeks, but they never last long. It takes a longer time to build a town of brick houses than it does of rude shanties. I am told that in England the houses look as though they were built to last, and the most of them have lasted a long time. Our houses and churches of course will not last long, because we do not build them to last; we put them up in a hurry, but in England they never build in a hurry. It does not require a great deal of time to daub a sign for a business house, but it took Angelo a long time to paint his immortal frescoes in the Sistine Chapel at Rome. You can build a log church in a few weeks by the farmers clubbing together, felling the trees, hewing the timber, and mortising the logs, but they began to build the Cathedral at Cologne in 1248, and never finished it until 1880. There had been a good many log churches built and destroyed within that time. We are building to last; the temples we are putting up are not to be touched by time; the palaces we are constructing shall not crumble, God is requiring work of us that shall survive the shock of death, that shall survive all the contingencies of time and chance and change. We are building for eternity, and it requires patience to do work of such quality that God will think it worth while to carry it over into everlasting life.

We have need of patience. You are here dis-

couraged, depressed, disheartened in the religious life? What is your complaint? "My temper—I am tired battling with it," some one is saying this morning; "I have been battling with it for twenty years, and only last week it was hot and fiery, bitter and stinging;" and another one is saying, "My insincerity—I do not know whether I inherited it from my father or my mother, but I have inwrought in the very fiber of my being a habit of being insincere, and I have been fighting it, and am tired fighting it;" and another one is saying, "I lack sympathy with men; this doctrine of having sympathy with men is a righteous, necessary, pleasant one, but I cannot feel it?" Another one is saying, "My conditions in life are hard; they are harder than I deserve; I ought not to have been left in these conditions, and I am weary of them; I have been trying to improve them for twenty years, and I am at a point when I am about to break down." One man is fighting some fleshly lust; he does not know whether to attribute it to inheritance, to corrupting associations at school, or to early temptations that overthrew him when he came to the city, but at last he turned about and has been fighting them, and he says: "I am weary and tired of this fight with my fiery lusts and swinish appetites." Tired! Weary! I can conceive of a young legal student, sitting within the railing when a great lawyer rises and makes a great argument, and he,

looking up at him, will be well-nigh appalled at the marvelous intellectual power of the man, at the vastness of his legal knowledge, and of his facile use of the same. But there was a time when the same lawyer, now so eminent in his profession, sat where the young man now does, and his answer to any questions would be, "The only way I can explain it is, I worked hard and kept working on and on." Gradually he familiarized himself with the knowledge and practice of his profession, gradually disciplined his powers, patiently he toiled; and it was by patience he came at last to the power and knowledge that now make him the leader of the bar. And so your temper will at last disappear under the power of Jesus Christ. It will not disappear in the sense that some of you expect it to disappear, namely, in the sense that the mettle will be taken out of you. Never will Jesus Christ so train the human soul as to take the fire out of the man, any more than you would train a spirited horse so as to take the mettle out of him; you would only bridle and control him. That is what Jesus Christ will do; he will leave all the mettle in, and teach you self-control.

See yonder! Who are these arrayed in white, nearest the eternal throne? Who are these, flawless, faultless now? Who are these, unstained, unwrinkled, fair and radiant, free and strong, for evermore? Who are these? Whence came they?

These are they who, through great tribulation, have washed their robes! These are they who, through faith and patience, have inherited the promise! These are they who once stood where we stand, and fought with our foes, and were smitten with our sorrows, and carried our burdens, and won at last their complete and glorious life!

Be patient with yourselves, because God means to be patient with you. You mean to give it up, do you? Well, God is not going to give you up; fix that in your minds. You are going to give it up, are you? God does not mean to give you up. "I can't learn it," and the little girl slams the book on the floor. "Yes, you can;" "I can't;" "Yes, you can;" and the mother takes the child and explains to her, "You can learn it, because I have enough love to wait until you do." The real hope of the child, although she may not know it, is in the mother's patience rather than in her own powers; and the hope of man is in the unwearible patience of God. Stand fast; fight valiantly, trust, wait, be patient. "Why sayest thou, O Jacob, and speakest, O Israel, My way is hid from the Lord, and my judgment is passed over from my God? Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary?" Did you ever hear that? "There is no searching of his understanding. He giveth power to the faint; and to



them that have no might he increaseth strength. Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall: but they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint." Wait, I say, on the Lord!



## SOVEREIGNTY OF PURPOSE

"But this one thing I do."—Phil. 3. 13.

THIS is the declaration of the apostle Paul. He had a purpose in life, a clear, distinct, strong, masterful purpose; and in his estimation everything else was relative, inferior, secondary, subordinate. "This one thing"—not "two" things, or "three" things, or "four" things, but "this *one* thing I do." Paul was so situated, he was a man of such endowments, that if he had been so minded, he might have attempted to do a great many things. He was a man of remarkable intellectual power, possessed of all the prime characteristics of genius. He was able to light his own fires of thought, and any man who can do that is a genius. We may be sure that as large, as expansive and growing an intellect as that of the apostle Paul could have found employment and delight in many directions. He lived at a time and under circumstances and in places likely to tempt him to become a dabbler and smatterer in a great many things. But he was not a philosopher, he was not a traveling rhetorician, he was not a Greek sophist, he was not a politician, he was not a *littérateur*, he was not a geographer, he was not an art critic. All the questions of philosophy that

solicit us were as eagerly discussed, and perhaps as ably discussed, by the early Greek philosophers; they have, in fact, anticipated many of the most vaunted conclusions of modern speculative thought. The apostle Paul did not trouble himself about them. The old Greek system of politics was waning, decaying, almost dead; we have no opinion of Paul as to the causes of its decline. He does not go into any question concerning the genius of the Roman government; he never steps aside at a single place to discuss any question that had arisen, or might be expected to arise, between the emperor and the senate, between the patrician and the plebeian, concerning the extension of the rights of Roman citizenship, or any cognate question. He visited cities that were rich in art, Ephesus, Corinth, Rome, and especially Athens, a city made glorious by the supreme and immortal genius of Phidias, that immortal worker in marble and gold and ivory and brass, but Paul passes no judgment on statue or temple. You may search his letters, speeches, addresses, and sermons in vain for any opinion on art. You would not surmise from anything that we have left of the apostle Paul, that he had ever visited a city that was made splendid by this great creative genius. He gives us no account of the countries through which he passed, as Humboldt, or Stanley, or Livingstone might have done; they seem to have made no impression on him at all. He never goes

into ecstasies over any natural scenery; there is no indication that any sea, or any landscape, or any range of mountains ever made any appeal to him. "This one thing I do." He had found a supreme purpose for living, he was mastered by it, he lived in it, it possessed him thoroughly. He saw all these outward things; he knew that Phidias had put his best work on the Acropolis; he quoted from two obscure Greek poets, but he never mentions the name of Socrates.

This one business of the apostle's life was to seize hold of that for which he had been seized by Christ Jesus. He had been apprehended by Christ Jesus for a certain purpose, and it was the strenuous effort of his life in return to grasp that great purpose. More and more did it outline itself before him, and in the presence of that sublime destiny everything else was relative and subordinate. "Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."

Paul was right. If life means what Jesus revealed it to mean, if human destiny be what Jesus

declares it to be, if the cross be what Paul understood it to be, if the love of God in Jesus Christ be what it is declared to be, if man be a spirit, and his body an accident, if trade and art and philosophy and literature and all things earthly be merely institutional, educational, preparatory, if man sprang from God, if, after this brief life, which flies swifter than a weaver's shuttle, immortality be our inheritance—then Paul was wise and reasonable when he declared that he had only one thing to do in life, to apprehend these great truths and be ruled by them.

I wish to speak to you to-night on decision of purpose, steadiness of aim, strenuousness of action, concentration of faculty and power, or anything you choose to call it, so that you understand that the object of this discourse is to arouse you to some supreme purpose in life. This is not narrowness, nor bigotry, nor stubbornness, nor opposition to progress and growth of knowledge. By sovereignty of purpose, I mean that which displaces aimlessness, purposelessness, supineness, drifting; it supplants the habit of vacillation, wavering, hesitation; it is that which gives a man a purpose in life, and holds him to it.

We recognize the necessity for such singleness of purpose along all lines of secular activity. The gradual enlargement of the field of human exertion, the increasing intricacy and complexity of the

world's work makes it necessary that we should narrow the sphere of individual exertions. Human life is too short, human faculties are too limited, and the work of the world is too vast for any one man to attempt successfully to work along three or four lines. There never were so many fields open to human enterprise as at this time; nor was competition ever so fierce or close as it is now. There never was a time when the strain upon men, even when they have narrowed their energies to a single channel or field, was so great as at this time. He who attempts to master two or three handicrafts, vocations, businesses will certainly fail. He will be set down as a smatterer, a charlatan, an empiric, shallow, superficial, who now undertakes many things. If ever there was a time when one human mind was equal to the task of compassing all knowledge, that time is past; if ever there was a time when any one human being was so gifted as to be capable of pursuing a half-dozen lines of activity at one time, and that thoroughly and precisely, that time is past. I remember the birth of this sermon. It was about two years ago, one morning, when I was very busy. A man came to my house and persisted until he saw me; he had one object in life, and I remember very distinctly of what his one purpose consisted. As soon as I entered the parlor, he began; he had a new process for making soap, and he wanted me to listen to him until I understood it, and he assured me that,

if I should once understand it, I would be glad to give him a letter of recommendation as the pastor of the church, so that he could sell it to all the thrifty housewives in the parish. The next day I received a package of patent medicines prepared by a quack doctor, with a letter, asking me to examine them all, and one in particular, and, if I found it to be according to description, to give him a letter of commendation for publication. Life is too short and human faculties are too limited for any one man to thoroughly understand the intricacies of soap making, to examine new medicines, and at the same time be a useful preacher. You agree that a preacher ought not to attempt all these things; you say, "Let him keep himself to his one province and master that." So it is with other men; you are not any greater or stronger than the average preacher, and you can no more spread yourself over too wide a field than can a preacher.

One advantage of having a clear and definite end in life, of having a supreme and sublime purpose, is that it will enable you to concentrate your energies. Concentration is power. The relation of concentration to power, if I stated it in the nomenclature of the transcendental philosophy of New England, would be this: it is the relation of cause and effect. Mr. Emerson substantially says so in his Essay on Power. Concentration *is* power. The farmer who concentrates his energy on a few acres is much more

likely to make farming profitable than the farmer who spreads his energies thinly over a great many acres. Some farmers in New England with twenty or twenty-five acres live better and make more money than many farmers in my native state who own one hundred and sixty acres; they have a narrower field, but they have concentrated their energies until there are no stones or briars or thistles or anything else left but productive soil. I say that concentration is power. If a man would be a great editor, he must be content to be a great editor. Mr. Greeley was grandly great as long as he was editing the Tribune; he was not great when he became a candidate for the Presidency; he made one mistake after another until the day of his defeat came. Mr. Choate was great at the bar; he was not great in the senate, and when he saw it he went back to the bar. Concentration is power; it always has been power; it always must be power; it is according to the nature of things.

Concentration, sovereignty of purpose, the compacting of our energies—if I may use the expression—gives breadth as well as depth. That is not the popular belief. The prevailing belief is that concentration, the massing of our energies on any one given point, will make an intense man, but not a broad man. He who aims at breadth primarily is not sure of depth, while he who primarily aims at depth is sure to secure breadth. If a lawyer con-



concentrates his energies, determining to be first of all a lawyer, and all the time a lawyer, it will not contract his sphere, it will in the end make him broad; but first it will give him depth. On the other hand, if he begins by dabbling a little in politics, and dabbling a little in literature, and dabbling a little in some outside speculation, and experimenting a little here and there, and only practicing law that he may make money and get a living, he will never be a great lawyer. But if he determines first of all to be a great lawyer, he will, perhaps, have practiced but two or three years when he will have a case that will involve a knowledge of medical jurisprudence. He never thought of studying medicine, but now he must study it in order to understand his case; he comes to the study of it with every faculty alert, under an intense strain—he wants to win his case; and the result of it is that while he reads it with the eyes of a lawyer, he incorporates his new knowledge into his permanent intellectual being, and after the trial of the case he will know more about the practice of medicine, and have a better understanding of the science of medicine, than if, as a mere dilettante he had attempted to add medicine to his profession of law. The case is not different with a physician. The physician who determines to be a physician, and not something else, is sure at last to have breadth as well as depth. He will not have practiced his profession a great length of time until



he will ascertain that he must know something about the mind in order to treat the body. He will read or study psychology not idly, not speculatively, but with direct reference to some patient that he wants to heal, and the result of it is that he broadens his field. I remember hearing General Garfield relate that there was but a single study which he partially neglected at college, and that study was chemistry. He said he kept himself steadily to his college work; he did not aim at anything beyond the mastery of the studies of the curriculum. He could not exactly explain why, but he had not been thoroughly aroused at the time to the importance of the science of chemistry. The first case that came to him as a lawyer involved a knowledge of chemistry, and he had to master it before he could try the case. The best way for a man to work is to concentrate his energies, even if at first he must confine them to a very narrow channel. I have seen two kinds of streams: one very spreading and ambitious, that distributes its waters widely, but ever becoming more and more shallow, until at last in its swelling vanity to be known as a very *wide* river, it loses itself in a swamp or morass. There are other rivers not so ambitious, and they begin by digging a channel, and they dig it deep, and they never fret themselves about banks until they are deep enough, and then they gradually eat away and widen the banks, until, with gathering force, with increasing momen-

turn, at last with majesty they find the sea. Which way are you going? To the morass or the sea?

Sovereignty of purpose will educate the will, and the will is the great faculty in getting the world's work done. It is not a question of the amount of knowledge, after all, so much as it is a question of the use of our knowledge. It is not how much knowledge a man has, but how much knowledge a man can use, that determines his power. The reason why so many college men and so many bookworms are practically so useless is that they have never possessed the power to transmute the thought into action. There are too many intellectual dyspeptics. I meet men who are like I am when I have overeaten at dinner—they have read so much, as I have eaten so much, that they are distressed! They have no power to digest what they read; it lies heavy on the intellectual stomach, and it is no wonder that they are stupid. It is not a question of how much knowledge you have; it is a question, after all, of how much knowledge you have the power to assimilate and to incorporate with your own intellectual being. *Will* governs this world; not knowledge, but will. The men who have convictions, not the men who have opinions, rule human affairs. The men who have tenacity of conviction, the men who adhere to their convictions with a bear-like hug are the men who rule the world. Will sways the scepter of the world. It is said that at

one of his great battles, where Napoleon had sixty thousand soldiers, one half of them, thirty thousand, were thieves and burglars—that is, thirty thousand men whom society would have chained, or kept under lock and key, were by this one masterful will brought into order and discipline and made a part of the most splendid army in the world. Some one once said to Sir Isaac Newton: “How did you achieve your great discoveries?” And his answer was: “By always intending my mind,” that is, by always concentrating his energies on a given end. Plutarch relates that Pericles was never seen in Athens but on one street, the street that led from his house to the market-place and the council chamber; he never dined out with a friend or accepted an invitation to a banquet during the whole period in which he ruled Athens. “Concentration,” says Mr. Emerson—and if you will not believe it from Paul or a Methodist preacher, I presume you will accept it from Emerson—“Concentration is the secret of success in politics, in war, in trade, and in the management of all human affairs. The one evil of life is dissipation! its one prudence is concentration. The gardener teaches us a lesson; he severely prunes the tree until he forces the sap into one or two vigorous limbs; he does not suffer it to spindle into a sheaf of twigs.”

Thus we have gone along together. You substantially agree with me that along all lines of secular

activity decision, positiveness, definiteness, and tenacity of purpose is a part of wisdom. Now, carrying these qualities with you, will you come with me into a higher realm? Will you not consent to the statement, that in the higher moral and religious relationships and duties, concentration, earnestness, decision, a clear and masterful purpose, is wisdom? What think ye? When we enter the highest sphere, are we at once to reverse the method, and say that here a man should doubt and hesitate and waver, that vacillation, irresolution, indecision shall take the place of definiteness, energy, and decision? Shall a man in the sphere of worldly activity shoot at the bull's-eye, and here fire into the air? Is it right for men in other things to decide to be deeply in earnest, to be resolute, to compact their energies, to deepen the channel, to gather momentum and power, but when it comes to the relationships and duties of the soul to drift and doubt and hesitate and postpone and procrastinate and prorogue? What think ye?

Here, perhaps, are half-hearted, uncertain, unstable, aimless Christian disciples. Can you say, "This *one* thing I do"? To how many of you is religion merely a decorative work, veneering, frescoing? To how many of you is religion a badge of respectability? To how many of you is religion a garment that you put on and take off—put it on on Sunday morning and come to church with it, and

take it off when you get home; putting it on when the evening of the prayer meeting comes, and taking it off when you go home? And to how many of you is religion what it was to Paul, the one reason *why* he lived?

Here are others who know nothing of sovereignty of purpose in the life of the soul. You have been wavering, vacillating, hesitating, doubting for years. To you, what is God? You have not accepted religion; you have not rejected it; you have not accepted God; you have not rejected him. To you, who is Christ? You have not accepted him; you have not rejected him. To you, what is the Bible? You have not determined whether it is the authoritative Word of God, or whether it is a fable. To you, what is prayer? You have not rejected prayer; you have not accepted prayer. To you, what is yourself? Have you determined this one question: Are you a spirit? What think you, are you a spirit? What do you believe about yourself? Have you yet lived earnestly enough, deeply enough, thoughtfully enough to *know* whether you are a spirit, or highly-organized matter? How many of you know by the power of the life of the spirit within you that the body is nothing at all but the house in which you live? You have not yet decided the fundamental question as to what you are. You are twenty, thirty, forty, fifty years of age, and you do not know yet whether you are an animal or a spirit.

“Decision flashes upon your counsels” in business, in politics, in study, in trade; you teach that a strong, controlling, and definite purpose is necessary to the highest success in all matters temporal, but in the realm of the spirit’s relationships to God what do you say? “I do not know; I do not know whether there is a God or not; I do not know whether I ought to pray or not; I do not know whether I have a spirit, or whether I am organized matter; I do not know whether to give my children a religious training or not; I do not know whether I ought to swear allegiance to Jesus Christ, or whether I ought to look upon him as a mere enthusiast.” Is not this the temper of your lives? Do you not thus soliloquize? You have agreed with me that you ought to decide along all other lines? Why will you not decide along the higher lines? How important, how unspeakably important is decision in these matters! These spiritual faculties and dispositions alone connect you with God; your body does not, nothing physical relates to God; your business does not, no cunning or sagacity relates a man to God; knowledge does not; genius does not; wealth does not; by none of these things do we enter into the life of God. Your body—you leave it here; your store—you leave it here; your cunning—it will be of no use over yonder; your secular knowledge—it shall shortly vanish away; genius—we shall know all things by spiritual intui-

tion in that life. All the terrestrial concerns about which we are so quick to decide are merely relative, temporary, educational; we leave them behind. The spirit within us is all that is saved out of the final wreck, and you do not yet know whether you have a spirit or not; you will not decide even this first question, and then earnestly seek to ascertain the relation of your spirit to God. I press you to a decision; I would incite you to instant and solemn sovereignty of purpose; I beseech you to know for yourselves whether these things be true or not; and finding them true, as you will, I press you to copy and be filled with the spirit of the apostle Paul, who, being seized by Christ Jesus for this sublime destiny, was ever eager, alert, intense, glowing to apprehend it, forgetting all that was behind, and, like a trained racer, reaching forth to the things that were before, pressing toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. How long halt ye between two opinions? If Baal be God, serve him; if the Lord be God, bow the knee to him to-night.



## JESUS AT PRAYER

“And when he had sent the multitudes away, he went up into a mountain apart to pray; and when the evening was come, he was there alone.”—Matt. 14. 23.

EARLIER in this chapter, Jesus is brought before us as overtaken by a great grief. It is related that when he heard of the cruel and shameful death of John the Baptist, he took a ship and sailed across the Sea of Galilee into a desert and solitary place. At this period of his ministry Jesus was almost constantly surrounded by eager and admiring crowds; and he felt the necessity, in the presence of this smiting sorrow, of seclusion and privacy. All deep grief seeks solitude. The freshly smitten heart wants to be alone with its sorrow and its God. As soon, however, as the people knew where Jesus was, they followed him on foot out of all the cities in the region round about, and when he saw the multitude of men and women streaming to him from every quarter, with their griefs, and sicknesses, and anxieties, and sorrows, and sins, it is said that “He had compassion on them and healed their sick.” We may be sure also that he mingled wise and timely instruction with this gracious exercise of his healing power. In this grateful and blessed employ, rewarding but fatiguing, the whole of the day was spent;



and as it grew to a close there occurred that striking and remarkable miracle where, with a few loaves and fishes, the great multitude of five thousand men, beside women and children, were fed by the Lord. As soon as the fragments had been gathered up we are told that Jesus straightway—suddenly, as if seized with a kind of holy haste, “straightway constrained,” impelled “his disciples,” as though they were reluctant about it, “to get into a ship, and go before him unto the other side.” And then he *sent* the multitudes away; he did not wait for them to go, he told them to go, and sent them away with that air of calm authority which at times came to him and so overawed the crowd. Then, when the evening was come, as the last straggler of the great multitude disappeared in the distance, he went up into a mountain apart to pray, and he was there alone. The sun, perchance, was just disappearing beneath the blue waves of the Mediterranean, the western sky was all aflame with celestial splendor, the clouds were touched with gold, and slowly, as day deepened into night, one after another the stars of God came out and began to shine in the infinite blue above him. Jesus is at prayer! A holy hush is on all the landscape. The Lord is in his holy temple, and all the earth is silent before him. Only God’s noiseless, white-winged angels are there, keeping solemn watch and ward above the weary Son of man.

“O, Thou, by whom we come to God,  
The Life, the Truth, the Way,  
The path of prayer thyself hast trod;  
Lord, teach us how to pray!”

We study this morning Jesus as a Man of Prayer. We read in Luke's account of the baptism of Jesus by John that, “Jesus also being baptized, and praying, the heaven was opened, and the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon him, and a voice came from heaven, which said, Thou art my Beloved Son; in thee I am well pleased.” He thus openly consecrates himself to his public work by prayer, by the uplifting of his soul to God. We read in another place: “And it came to pass as he was alone praying, his disciples were with him”—a striking form of expression, as though they had come upon him suddenly, and surprised him in the act of prayer. It is not to be denied that Jesus frequently craved solitude, and eagerly sought it, and that when he was alone, his heart instantly and gladly refreshed itself in prayer. The bent of our thoughts, the color and complexion of our imaginations, the direction of the current of our affections and desires, when we suddenly find ourselves alone, constitute a fine test of the reality and depth and fervor of our religious life. If you want to know what you are, and which way your being tends with the greatest power, observe carefully the thoughts, purposes, desires, and affections

that spontaneously arise in your mind when you find yourself alone. We read also in the first verse of the eleventh chapter of Luke, "And it came to pass, that, as he was praying in a certain place, when he ceased, one of his disciples said unto him, Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples." His diligence and earnestness in prayer aroused the attention and quickened the spiritual aspirations of his disciples. In the account of the Transfiguration scene in Luke we are told that it was while Jesus was in the act of prayer that the marvelous change in his face and raiment and demeanor began to take place: "And it came to pass about an eight days after these sayings, he took Peter and John and James, and went up into a mountain to pray. And as he prayed, the fashion of his countenance was altered, and his raiment was white and glistening." We read also in the first chapter of Mark of one of the busiest, one of the most absorbing and fatiguing days of his public ministry, his labors extended far into the evening, teaching and admonishing, healing the sick and restoring the lunatic. How did he recreate himself for the next day's labor? "And in the morning, rising up a great while before day, he went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed." Again we read in Luke: "And it came to pass in those days that he went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer." The night of prayer

on the mountain was followed by his formal selection and public consecration of the twelve disciples to their peculiar and responsible work. In the Garden of Gethsemane he gave himself up to prayer, as no other being ever gave himself up to prayer. Three times did he fervently pray for strength, that he might be able to drink the mysterious cup of sin and sorrow, which was now being pressed to his lips: "And being in an agony, he prayed more earnestly; and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground." Amid the cruelty and the shame, the sharp pain and agony of the cross, he did not cease to pray; scarcely had the cross been placed in its position until he prayed, "Father, forgive them; they know not what they do;" and as he was about to depart out of the body came the last prayer, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit."

First of all, the example of Jesus as a Man of Prayer emphasizes for us the duty, the beauty, and the value of solitary, secret prayer. He loved to pray, not only, but he loved to pray *alone*. There can be no doubt that Jesus was fond of solitude, that the crowds and cities were with him only matters of duty, and that the great temple of nature, solitude, quiet and deep meditation, the communion of his soul with his Father, were the joy and inspiration and strength of his life. He derived the love, the insight, the courage, the patience, and the forti-

tude with which he endured all that came to him by this devotion to private, solitary prayer. My friends, have we learned that lesson? Have we learned the value, the duty, and the beauty of secret prayer? We need to learn that no amount of public devotion, that no amount of public prayer, that no amount of prayer with the family, or in the church, or at the prayer meeting, will ever atone or make compensation to us for the loss we suffer by refusing to obey the example and the commands of our Lord concerning private, secret, personal prayer. This is not strange. Those of us who are parents, if we be wise and worthy, and if we are at all observant of our children, know this: that our children desire sometimes to be with us alone; that each child, I mean, at times desires to be with the father or the mother when all the other children are absent. The wiser we are, the worthier we are, the more loving, the deeper and truer our insight and penetration into the nature of our children, the readier will be our discernment of this desire. We will not only grant them the privilege of being with us alone, but we will encourage and invite such intimacy. Each child in the family has its own temperament, its own peculiarities, its own desires, its own plans, its own temptations, its own experiences; and the child does not like to tell about its difficulties and temptations and plans and hopes before the other children, and if you are wise there will be long walks, now with

the son, now with the daughter, when no one else is present except son or daughter. My father was not disposed to be over-communicative to me when I was a boy, and among the recollections that I have that are pleasant now and that help me very much, are the times when I had the opportunity to be alone with my father, and talk with him about what I wanted to be and to do. Do you know that you need to see your Father alone? You are nothing but grown up children—and the distance between ourselves and our children, when compared with the distance between us and God, serves to reveal how much more we are children to him than our children are to us. Grown up children are we all, and our stores and banks and offices are simply playthings, little toys, of no more final or absolute importance than are the tops and tools of our children. O! if we are wise we will often be alone with our Father, to be taught, to be refreshed, to be strengthened by the freedom of the intercourse afforded by solitude and privacy. Our Master, at every period, every phase, and every turning point in his experience, was equal to the temptations, the trial hours, and the strifes, that came to him. Is he to be tempted of the devil forty days? He prays at his baptism before the trial comes. Does a great grief come into his life? He *will* be free from the crowd, and though at first they seem to outmatch him, and in their thoughtless eagerness crowd about him, his

heart well-nigh breaking the meanwhile, when the evening comes he will compel his disciples to get into the ship. He will *send* the crowd away, and at last he will stand alone on the top of the mountains, with nothing between himself and his Father. Is he nearing the day of arrest, and trial, and death? Then he spends the night in prayer. "And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly; and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood, falling down to the ground." And while he prayed the rest slept. When the trial hour came the next day he conquered, and when it came to them they were false and recreant and cowardly, and *failed*. The difference between two Christian men suddenly brought into the presence of a temptation to be false is, that the one who overcomes the temptation was on his knees that morning, and the man who yields to it has not been alone with God for a week. He who is alone with his Father in secret shall be rewarded in public, and he who neglects to see his Father in secret will always be shorn of strength in the moment of trial and temptation and danger.

If we should imitate Jesus as a Man of Prayer, if herein, as elsewhere, we are to make him the inspiration and example of our lives, we should have prayer as a habit, and we are to strive to form the habit of prayer. How did Jesus pray? He prayed, if I may so say, with the free inspiration that is born of rou-



tine. Routine observance on the part of the loyal man always leads to inspiration; routine work at the keys of the organ means, after a while, inspiration at the keys of the organ, but there can be no inspiration until after the routine. Familiarity with the technique of painting means inspiration in painting at last; but the technique first, and after that the inspiration in its order. And so it is with prayer; the routine of prayer, the fixed place for prayer, the appointed time for prayer—at last out of these will grow a habit and disposition of prayer, so that we live in its atmosphere. Jesus prayed with freshness and spontaneity, but the basis of that spontaneity would be found, had we the particulars of his daily Nazareth life, in the faithfulness with which he observed the routine of prayer. He was fixed, established, grounded in the habit of prayer, and the moment he was alone he was praying. Prayer with us is an exceptional, an occasional experience. How few of us live in the atmosphere of prayer, how few of us abide in it, how few of us have graduated from the routine of prayer into the realm of inspirational prayer! I preach to those who are able to receive it that there are no necessary nor mechanical times and seasons for prayer; but alas! there are very few able to receive it. No one is able to receive it who has not first drilled himself by routine observance into such a spiritual and prayerful disposition, that his whole life is lived in that atmosphere.



He need not have fixed times for prayer—like Jesus he will spontaneously pray.

There are people who reserve prayer for the emergencies of life. I knew a man, a good man, a member of the church, a communicant, a prayerful man, as church people ordinarily go, who passed through a threatening and menacing experience in his business for two or three weeks, and he prayed more in that time than he had prayed for fifteen or twenty years. He confessed as much to me, and he regarded it as an honorable confession. When his business affairs turned out as he desired he told me that it was because he prayed so much and so earnestly; he believed that God had answered his prayers as against the other man—for it was a question where one must go down if the other went up. That is not Christian prayer, it is superstition, it is necromancy, it is magic, it is anything but Christian prayer. A man finds himself in a narrow and hard place as against another man, and as one or the other of them must go down, he goes to work and prays; both are members of the church, one is a Congregationalist, and the other is a Methodist, and finally, by dint of hard praying for two weeks, the Methodist beats the Congregationalist! Why, that is wretched superstition; that is not prayer at all. Prayer is something more than the use of Omnipotence for the purpose of outwitting your brother. There are those who reserve prayer for the emer-

gency of death. There are those that reserve prayer for the emergency of grief. My brethren, it should not be so; our lives should be suffused with the spirit of prayer; the perfume of prayer should be on the whole of life, on its sorrows and its joys, on its successes and on its defeats, on our studies, on our recreations, on all that we have, or do, or think, or become; we should live our whole life in the very air of prayer. Do we not need it? Are you satisfied with your moral stature? Are you content with your spiritual state? Do you find it easy to live your life? And do you find it easy to live it, because it is so low in tone? Try earnestly to live a real life, try for one whole day to fulfill one single command, in the spirit as well as the letter—"Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself," bind yourself to keep that for twenty-four hours, and you will learn the need of prayer. If He needed to pray, how much more do we! If he, in the presence of temptation, needed to pray, how much more do I need to pray in the presence of temptation! If he needed to be in solitude and prayer when grief came, that he might know what it meant, how much more do I need to go away from the crowd, to be alone with my grief and my God, that I may know what it means. If we would escape the corruption of the world, if we would build ourselves up in all virtue and godliness, we must like him drill ourselves into the habit of prayer, so that prayer shall live in us, so that

prayer may be the very breath of our lives, so that when we are asked when we pray, and how often, and how long, we may be able to smile at the questions, because our whole life and mind shall be a thanksgiving to the Power that made us.

The example of Jesus as a man of prayer teaches us that we are to seek our Father alone with nature. Where did Jesus pray? In desert places. Have you ever read a description of one of these desert places, on the eastern side of the Sea of Gennesaret, whither Jesus oftentimes resorted for secret prayer? It will be good reading for you to take your Farrar's or Geikie's Life of Jesus this afternoon and read what a barren, desolate, and forbidding region it was. If ever you have traveled much, and especially in the country, you know that when you reached a desolate region it was hard to pray. He loved the mountains, and prayed on their sides and on their summits; he loved the sea, and prayed on its pebbly beach; he loved nature, and he loved to be alone with his Father and with nature. He did not disparage or despise the temple or the synagogue. He never sought to cast any odium on public or consecrated places; but, as for himself, he preferred to pray in the great temple of the Universe. This lesson also we need to learn. We are all being insensibly affected by this city life of ours. These long rows of houses, these paved streets, this little patch of blue sky, that we see perhaps once a

fortnight, is slowly and unfavorably affecting us, cramping and dwarfing us, making us conventional, artificial, unreal, mechanical. Bryant was right; nature does calm us :

"She glides  
Into our darker musings, with a mild  
And healing sympathy, that steals away  
Their sharpness ere we are aware."

There is that in nature, and there is that in communion with nature, which none of us can afford to dispense with, either in the foundation or the building of character. I count that man fortunate who was born within sight of the mighty sea or a lofty range of mountains. The German, Jean Paul, says that "Music dilates the heart to its whole capacity for the Infinite." So does the sea to the child, and so will a lofty range of mountains to a young and growing soul. Happy is that man who, whether by music, or by eloquence, or by the sea, or by the mountains, has had his heart dilated to its whole capacity for the Infinite! Without these three things no great, or strong, or deep, or fruitful character can be built—Solitude, Communion with Nature, Prayer to Almighty God. All other characters are weak, feverish, unreal, unequal to life's heavy tasks, and yield when suddenly brought under pressure. The great, strong, deep, calm, mighty souls have been those that dared to be alone; those who loved the sea, and the mountains, and the sky;

those that under the mystic azure arch have prayed to God. There is an added solemnity, a heightened reality, to life and love, to work and duty, to prayer and God, as we stand under the unfretting stars, seeming to whisper, "Peace, peace, troubled soul! Immortality is not far away!"

Finally, the example of Jesus as a Man of Prayer teaches us that we are to make provision for fitting times and occasions to pray, and that we are to give ourselves to securing those times with firmness and earnestness. I recall your attention to the teaching of the text and context: "And they that had eaten were about five thousand men, beside women and children. And Jesus straightway *constrained*"—that is, compelled—"his disciples to get into a ship, and to go before him unto the other side, while he *sent* the multitudes away." He seems to have been seized with a holy impulse, with a divine fervor. As a hungry man, long abstaining from food by enforcement, draws near at last to a table filled with bounties, and is impatient, so does his soul, that had all day long carried its lonely grief over the death of John the Baptist, now at last cry out, "I must have my Father!" The disciples are gone. He sends the multitude away, and at once he seeks prayer with God. O, how our prayers contrast with his! How veined they are with insincerity! How cold they are! How formal, how lifeless, how perfunctory, how official, how weak! How few of us

have ever learned to send the multitude away, if not the multitude of people, then the multitude of distracting thoughts. We make a feeble, languid, sickly effort to dispossess our mind, and so we seek to appease our conscience. We kneel down to offer a few hurried words of prayer, and all the time we hear the worldly voices, or the tramp of hurrying feet, and we are not alone with our God; nor do we have the time, the patience, the strenuousness of faith required to say to this crowd of thoughts about gold, and honor, and wealth, and ease, and pleasure, "Leave me!" How long has it been since by foresight you saved an hour to be alone with God? How superficial our prayers are! Alas! how many use prayer merely as a spell, as a kind of cabalistic word or necromancy, like some Eastern magician or African fetish worshiper; we rush through the list of the charmed words, vainly and superstitiously imagining that because we have *said* them we have averted the wrath of an angry God. What a humiliation of prayer that is! How many use prayer as a charm, as the ignorant savage hangs about his neck his string of beads to keep off the demons and the evil spirits that otherwise might consume him! How many there are who use prayer simply that they may have their children live longer; how many use prayer that the new business scheme may be prospered; how many use prayer that they may have an advantage over a rival! Again, I say, this is

not prayer; it is superstition, gross and debauching. Prayer is communion with God, prayer is the uplifting of the soul until it is in God's presence consciously, prayer is that spiritual exercise by which a man enters into joyous and purifying communion with the great Spirit of the universe, and the best prayer of all prayers asks nothing, it loves and adores and worships, and thus is gradually transformed into the moral likeness of him to whom we pray.

You covet the qualities of Jesus, you covet his patience, you covet his generosity, you covet his self-denial, you covet his devotion, you covet the fine temper of his mind and heart toward man—live as he did, pray as he did, send the multitudes away, send the cares away, go into the country, go away from your business, look at the sea, stand on its deep-sounding shores, count the stars, *pray*, PRAY! And unless you do these things you will remain to the end what you are this morning.

Suffer me, my brethren, to exhort you to pray. Are you young, and just fastening on the armor for the strife of life? Then pray as Jesus prayed at his baptism, that the Holy Ghost may descend upon you! Are you in joy? Then steep and perfume your joys in prayer. Are you in adversity? Then pray to be delivered from the bitter spirit of envy and malignity and despair. Are you weary of the world? Then force yourself to be alone with God,



and the stars, and the sea, and the mountain, and duty and eternity, and you will come back to life equipped to wage successful war against every foe. Do you see the cross looming up darkly before you? Then pray that you may have fellowship with his sufferings through whose cross the world found life. Does the crowd applaud you? Then pray that no crown may ever be on your forehead but the Crown of Life. Does the crowd hiss and execrate you? Then pray that you may have fellowship with him who was alone save as the Father was with him. Are you on the mount of vision, breathing the heavenly air, your heart glowing with strange joy, the horizons disappearing one after another, until there are no horizons, and you feel the presence and power of eternity? Then pray that you may not be content to stay there, but that you may be quickened to come back to where men struggle, and help them. Has the evening come? It hastens for some of us. Has the evening come? Does the sinking sun begin to touch the waves of life's mysterious sea? Are you looking upon the well worn paths, and the familiar landscape, and the dear faces, for the last time? Do you feel the damp dew, the chill shadow, the solemn breath, of Night? Then pray that it may please God graciously to fulfill in you the words of the prophet, *At evening time it shall be light.*



## OUTSIDE LOSSES, INSIDE GAINS

"But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord."—Phil. 3. 7, 8.

THE Bible, especially the New Testament, abounds in spiritual paradoxes. Among these may be mentioned such forms of statement as these: "He that findeth his life shall lose it, and he that loseth his life shall find it;" "Seeing ye shall not see, and hearing ye shall not hear, neither shall ye understand;" "To him that hath shall be given, and from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath;" "The first shall be last, and the last shall be first;" "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal." Life is to be considered from two sides, from the outside and the inside, from the external and the interior, from the visible and the invisible, from the physical and the spiritual. He who comes to the Bible, more particularly the later portion of it, in order to un-

derstand it must get its eye, must see life as it does, must climb to its vantage ground, and breathe its bracing, tonic air. It is characteristic of the Word of God that it is always looking at life from the inside and not the outside, from the interior and not the exterior, from the invisible and not the visible, from the eternal and not the temporal, from the spiritual and not the physical; and he, therefore, who would come to an adequate comprehension of the genius of the Word of God, and who would possess himself of the clues by which its spiritual paradoxes are to be rendered clear, potent, and penetrating, must look at life through its eyes, and from its crystalline heights. The New Testament, in some things, is like an orange; it is better inside than it is outside. And he who undertakes to get at the New Testament as a greedy child eats an orange, by beginning with the rind, will not always find it pleasant to the taste. But he who has patience first to peel off the rind will find it succulent and edible, and grateful to the taste.

The text contains an implied spiritual paradox, such as abound in this Book. The apostle here writes of losses that were gains, and of gains that were losses, and it is my purpose to speak to you this morning on gain and loss in life. You ought to prick up your ears at that! You are interested in that, most of you; you give six days out of seven to it. That is the problem in which you are all vitally

and constantly concerned from one week's end to another. Now, some things that I am going to say this morning will be largely unintelligible to worldly and unspiritual minds. I will be guilty at times of speaking in the language of spiritual paradox, and the unspiritual man will stumble at it. There is a great deal of talk in our day about the doctrine of evolution. The popular comprehension of the doctrine of evolution is that it is an attempt to account for the origin of man by developing him from the animals, and it is asserted by those who oppose it that no case has been found in which man has been actually evolved from the animal, and we read much about "the missing link." I am not myself so much troubled about evolution in the past as I am about evolution now, because I see it going on all about me, and the uncompleted evolutions that I see before me are what perplex me. It is not an irrational statement to me, that man sprang from the animal in the past, when I see so many men in the world that have not yet gotten rid of the animal. Some men have gotten about as far as the serpent, and they have not evolved beyond that, and hence we speak of snaky men, serpentine men. There are some men who have reached about the point of the bear, and we meet bearish men, and they seem content with their evolution. It is said that the buffaloes of the Western prairies, when they stampede, pay no attention to any weak members of the herd

who may fall out by the way, but trample them to death; and I am sure that a good many men have not been evolved far beyond the buffalo, because when I see them pushing and jostling each other, and a weak man falls out by the way, do they not often leave him there to die? The doctrine of man's development from the animal in the past is not after all so absurd, because a great many men have not been evolved much beyond the animal to this day.

The basis of what I mean to say is the spiritual philosophy of life. This spiritual philosophy of life has its axioms. The first is, GOD; he is a Spirit, subtle, pervasive, diffusive, universal, eternal; "Now unto him, the King Eternal, Immortal, Invisible, the only wise God, be glory forever and ever. Amen." The second is, that this God is to be sought of men, that he is especially a rewarder of them that *diligently* seek him; that they shall know who follow on to know; that wherever there is a heart that pants for him as the hunted hart for the cooling water-brook, there shall be found a discernment, a realization of the divine. Another axiom in the spiritual philosophy is *man*; that he, too, is a spirit, subtle, pervasive, flexible, diffusive, educatory. Another axiom of this spiritual philosophy is, that all that we see, the whole round of human life, all its secular contrivances, and all its temporal concerns, yea, the old earth itself, are mere stages, temporary, and instrumental, to a higher end, namely,

the culture, the unfolding, the development of the spirit; that this spirit of man lays hold of the eternities all about it; that it was made for them; that it has its true and full life in them only; that it not only hungers for God, but that it has positive capacities for God; that the earth is simply a temporary training ground and schoolhouse for this spirit of man, and that whenever it shall have fulfilled its purpose as a spiritual gymnasium, it shall be shattered into ten times ten million atoms, or burnt with fire, or be used by its Maker for the development of other forms of life, or be appointed as the glorified abode of the perfected spirits here schooled. The spiritual philosophy includes the axiom that man hastens to a dateless, timeless, measureless life, with neither night nor day, with no temple, with no altars, with no priests, with no pain, with no sickness, with no imperfections, with no impediments of locality, with no physical life of flesh and blood, but with an organism that shall be known as a spiritual body, as subtle, as plastic, as flexible as the enfranchised and empowered spirit within it. I cannot prove these things. I cannot prove to a clod the reality of spirit, and if there is a man here that is a clod, I cannot prove it to him. I cannot prove that a man is a spirit, where he is an animal. I cannot prove to a gross, obese, sensual man, a gourmand, a voluptuary, an epicure—I cannot prove to such a man, who has stunted and dwarfed and

starved and almost stifled his spirit, and given long supremacy to his flesh and his appetites—that he has a spirit. First of all, he must feel the pulse, the quickening thrill, of the spiritual life, before any arguments addressed to his mere understanding will prove to him that he *is* a spirit.

Having said this much I remark, first of all, that many of the apparent gains of life are real losses. Health is a gain in life, sometimes apparent, sometimes real. A vigorous body, sound nerves, a good stomach, a clear head (I mean this kind of a head, though not this particular head to which I point; I mean the physical head, as distinguished from the other head, the head that thinks), these are all of great importance to a man, if he means to be really a *man*.

Intellectual endowments of a high order and of great variety—in other words, what our mothers give us, as contrasted with what the schools give us—is an actual gift and may be a great and positive gain. Fortunate and easy conditions in life are so much gain, at least they are generally so regarded. I take it that we so regard them, because the bent of most of our striving is to provide such conditions for those whom we love best, for our own children. We must think that fortunate and easy conditions are a gain, or there would not be this constant thought, this self-denial, and anxiety, and care, and toil, to make ready such conditions for our children.

Prosperity and success, whether it be in the realm of business or of professional activity, whether it be the result of a single splendid stroke of genius, or of the slow accumulation, the patient efforts of long years—however it comes, whether we wake up famous, or come to see it as we go down to the grave, whether by one investment the millions are ours, or whether we slowly pile them up through the years—is it not gain? It depends. Health is not always gain. How is it about men of health, men of perfect, superb, royal health? Every rule has its exceptions, but is not the rule this, that the men who have this perfect health have not great intellectual powers? I go back now, in memory, to the men who have had perfect health, strong nerves, good blood, perfect circulation, and sound digestion, men without weakness or pain; I go back to them, beginning in the town in which I grew up, noting them here and there, and if I were selecting candidates for a parliament of intellectual kings there are not half a dozen of them that I would propose for the suffrages of the people. Health is gain, but how often it degenerates into mere sensuousness or mere athleticism, and athleticism is not a gain, because an athletic life alone dwarfs the faculties and makes the forehead a narrow and retreating one. He who has observed the conspicuous athletes knows that they are not distinguished by any decided intellectual cast of countenance. Gifts



—and this truth is so old, so apparent that it is now called trite—who does not know that it is a trite truth that a magnificent intellectual endowment is no sure augury of permanent intellectual power? Who does not know that as a rule the boys who seem to get their lessons quickly, who can repeat them glibly, and by their brilliant shallowness deceive the unpracticed and unwary teacher, are not the boys who become the great, steady, sturdy thinkers? Easy and fortunate conditions are a blessing only when the character is inherently strong; but how many of those who are born to wealth and ample leisure are enervated thereby, never know the joy or the power of exertion, never know what it is to be inventive and skillful, and never learn the lesson of self-reliance. Prosperity, whether it be professional or commercial, is not always a gain. I remember that I thought so when I first looked out at life, but I have learned that the period of actual spiritual danger with most men, the philosophy of the spiritual life remaining true, is the period of great success. The period of great danger to the successful merchant is when the thousands are rolling in upon him. The period of danger to the physician, and to the lawyer, and to the preacher, and to the tradesman and to the mechanic, of danger to all men, is when they begin to win their several prizes. Have you never seen prosperous and successful men who were rich and strong on the outside and poor



and thin and mean on the inside? Have you never seen a man on 'Change whose slightest footfall made everybody tremble, the man who was easy, cool, indifferent; came late and apparently never looked at the price board; seemed slovenly about his dress, and looked as though he did not care, when it was all a quiet assumption of power? Have you not despised him? Have you not felt and known at the time that while the man was thus strong on the outside he was a hard and pitiless man on the inside? Now, he has paid something for everything he has. I ask you to-day what he is, and you say he is cold. Do you want a cold heart? You say he is cruel. Do you want to be cruel? You say he is pitiless. Do you want to be pitiless? It is a great thing to walk through an exchange and domineer it, but that is a good round price to pay for it, to pay down cruelty in one large pile on the table, and then to pay down pitilessness in another pile, and then to pay down selfishness in another large pile, and then to pay down—I don't know what to call it; he does not steal, but he pinches off the edges of honesty here and there; he pinches off just as far as he can and the law not get hold of him. You know he has done so for a quarter of a century. He has not been arrested and put in prison, but you believe that he needs to be watched, and you are careful and alert when he proposes a transaction with you. He is rich on the outside, but as a man once said on

one of the great exchanges, an old, wise, unenvious man (we should never take the testimony of the envious), as he came down one of the stairways, "I have been here now for thirty years, and my observation is, that pretty generally as the money comes in the soul shrivels up." Now, if there be a God, if he be a spirit, penetrating, universal, everywhere present; if man may find and know him; if man be a spirit; if the old earth is nothing but a schoolhouse and, like all schoolhouses, temporary and instrumental; if the earth be a mere scaffolding and, like all scaffolding, to be taken down when the temple is built; if man as a spirit be hastening to a dateless, timeless, measureless life, many of our apparent gains are real losses.

Many of our seeming losses are compatible with true gain, and some of our actual losses are necessary to real gain. What do I hear men say? "I lost two days last week by sickness;" "I lost a month last year by sickness;" "I lost a year by sickness;" "last year was a good year, I never lost a day by sickness." These are the current expressions. Is sickness always a loss? Some men have gained a great deal by sickness. Some men have found out by sickness that they had been married. Some men have found out by sickness that they had once paid court to a fair and beautiful woman. They had lost sight of that for years; they took two meals with the woman they called their wife, and came

into the house in the evening and remained there over night; but the great depth, tenderness, and wealth of that quiet, un murmuring, long-suffering heart they never knew until they were sick for six months; and then they gained a knowledge of what is in a woman's heart (and most men know nothing about it) that will last them all their lives. They found out that they were slowly killing the woman they had promised to love until death should part them. And it is well for a man to find out before it is too late, as many a man in this congregation needs to find out, that it is wrong to murder one's wife by indifference, by selfishness, by gradual estrangement, by the mad, feverish pursuit of wealth or ambition.

And pain: is that a loss? Not always. It is a deep and unfathomable mystery. It is a wide and solemn mystery, touching all the shores of being, but sometimes it clarifies our vision and enriches our hearts. I want to say this day, to the praise of the glory of his grace, who is the manifested God, that the deepest insight, the clearest view I ever had of Jesus Christ—of the nearness and reality of the divine nature, the clearest spiritual revelation of the great truth of religion, that God is, that he is love, and that he serves the lowest, came to me when my brain was a quivering mass of pain; when, pressing my hands to the aching temples, suddenly Peter's words came to me: "Forasmuch then as

Christ hath *suffered for us in the flesh*, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind." And I held my hands there in the darkened room, and said, "And did God suffer in the flesh? and did God know the thrill of physical pain? Did God know what it was to have lacerated nerves? and is he *my* God? Then I am not alone in the whirling maze; I am not an orphan; then the light of the Infinite is mine, and the vast spaces are not cold, barren, soulless." That was a great pain.

The losses of condition have their recompenses and gains. Last week I received word to the effect that a very dear friend had failed and made an assignment; in other words, that two hundred and fifty thousand dollars, that everybody thought he stood for a few months ago, had melted away. In speaking of it at the table, and trying to explain a failure to the wondering children, I said, "He lost everything." All that evening the phrase pursued me: "Lost everything." It was a careless speech. Has he lost everything? I said, and I began to look into it. He has not lost his wife; the Associated Press despatch that announced his failure did not announce that his wife was dead; and his children, they were not dead; and they were a great deal to him. Before my children should lack bread for their mouths, or raiment for their backs, I would carry a hod of mortar or take a hammer and break stone to ballast a railroad; and he is a better man

than I am, albeit he is a layman and I am a preacher, and what I would do for my children he would do for his children, and he has them yet. And his friends; he has not lost his friends. He has lost his outside, spurious, pretended friends; he has lost the friends who were tied to him because he was rich; because he lived in elegance in a great city, in a magnificent house, and was a controlling spirit in a great church. He has lost all the men who expected to reach the pastorate of that church through him. But he has not lost one genuine *friend*. I would cross the street through the mud twice as quick to find him now as when he was in wealth and power; I have a warmer grasp of my hand for him the next time he comes here than when he was here the last time; and I am only one of many friends whom he has not lost, and will not soon lose. And God: he has not lost God. God is as near to his home to-day as he was on the Sunday I was there and enjoyed its generous hospitality. Yes, God is nearer, because his child is in trouble and needs him more. The nearness of God is measured by the greatness of our need. He has not lost his integrity, his fine sense of honor. I know him well enough to know that not only will his house go, but that his gold watch, his books, his pictures, everything he has will be surrendered before he will deal fraudulently with his creditors. And so, after all, he has not lost much, for he has his wife and his children,

and his friends, and his unsullied integrity, and the Friend that sticketh closer than a brother, and his own spirit, and the coming eternities, and the everlasting growth. He is still rich.

In a small city in this country there is a woman who lives a strange life, according to the ordinary standard of life among women of her tastes and training. You will find her almost every afternoon in the tenement houses, especially where there are any sick, and no less where the diseases are infectious and contagious. You will find her in the schools where the children are rude and coarse and ignorant; you will find her where the people are shiftless, slovenly, repellant. Five, eight years ago it was not so. She lived in one of the finest houses in the town. Her husband was the financial secretary of one of the largest manufacturing enterprises of the place. His hair is cropped close now, and he wears a striped suit of clothes in a state penitentiary. Then, she was a gay, vain, frivolous woman; to her inferiors, cold, haughty, proud; but her head has bowed. She has lost a great deal on the outside; lost this princely home—the men from whom her husband had embezzled the money took that; it belonged to them; the poor mill hands, whose savings he stole, took everything he had; it fairly and equitably belonged to them. She has lost wealth not only, but her former influence and position; she has lost the good name in which she

boasted, for it is not good to be known by the name of a convict and a penitentiary bird. She has lost more on the outside than I can tell you. But she is rich inside. Now, I am not here to preach to you that God conspired with this man to steal this money in order to secure this spiritual training and elevation for this woman. The lines of my philosophy on these deep questions run out a little way and then break down. There are many questions that I cannot answer. I cannot tell anything about the final reasons or causes of that man's sin. I know God did not conspire with him to cheat these mill people in order to secure the spiritual development of his wife. But I know that when the overmastering moment of humiliation came; when the officers of the law came and took her husband away to the state penitentiary, she rose up a new and spiritual woman, filled with the very Spirit of Christ. I know this; that as when, after a long season of drought, the drenching rain beats to the ground the parched and unfragrant flowers, so there came to her a storm that bent her down to the ground; and I know, too, that as when, after the rain is past, the cleansed flowers lift themselves again into the glad air, and send their fragrance forth, and the air is redolent with perfume, so she has been raised up to the realm of the divine and the spiritual, her name is as ointment poured forth, and many rise up to call her blessed. Outside losses, inside gains!



Once I stood, on the thirty-first day of December, some years ago, in the gallery of the New York Stock Exchange. The brokers, the bulls and the bears, or whatever they call them, the men that make themselves hoarse, were having a grand gala day as they closed up the business of the year. A man by my side was attentive and thoughtful, and he said to me, "They have had a good year of it, I suppose, among themselves, but it was a bad year for me. They have got fifteen thousand dollars of my money down there among them." And I suppose he thought that I was sorry, but I was not. He may, perhaps, have thought that I was praying. If I prayed at all, this was my prayer: "O, Lord, if it please thee, take fifteen thousand more from this man. He is already under conviction; let them take a little more from him, and he will be what I once knew him to be, an upright, noble, open-hearted, sober, reverent, spiritual man." Outside losses, inside gains!

Daniel Drew was never as great to me when he was reputed to be worth three or four millions, and founded a theological seminary for the Methodist Episcopal Church and made Wall Street tremble, as when, stripped of all his property, the old man turned toward God in penitence and trust. I would then have doffed my hat to him any time. As it is with the losses of life so, often, is it with the losses of death. A man cloisters himself and family from



the troubles and miseries of the great world, and has his own plan for family government, and thinks he will rear an ideal family according to an ideal plan. After a while a messenger comes to his home for whom he never sent. The death of little children means one thing to those who are not parents and it means another thing to those who are parents. The first two years I was in the ministry, when I went to the funerals of little children, and took the book out of my pocket to read the burial service, I would listen to the sobs and cries of the poor, ignorant Welsh women over their dead boys and girls with wonder and surprise. I did not think they were fools exactly, but I thought they were not wise or philosophic. God forgive me for the indifferent feeling I had toward them when they rained their tears on the faces of their dead babes in the pine coffins in that mining town! I thought they ought to be glad that the little boys and the little girls were out of such a world as this. After a while there came a little girl to our house, and when she was six months old I had to read that same service by the side of the coffin of a little girl six months old, and as I thought of my own little girl, and what her death would mean to me, I read it with a new and deeper meaning. Into this man's house came the unbidden messenger, and his icy breath was on the face of his little girl. He did not pray, he did not weep, but he stood dazed, stupefied, amazed,

until the child was dead, and he went out into the world mad, fierce, defiant. Years went by, and after a while he said: "Where is she?" and that moment his face, that had been toward the ground, was raised a little. In another year he said: "What is she?" and he began to look at the stars. And after another year he said: "And what is she to me?" He joined no church and professed no creed, but slowly, insensibly, wondering where she was, wondering what she was, he was being spiritualized. Time went on, and his hair grew gray, and as he still pondered the mystery of life, and love, and death, he was kinder in the tones of his voice, he was kinder to the boys in the office, kinder to his customers, kinder to all men, and one day he surprised his wife by saying: "I am going over there to teach in that mission school where those miscreant boys are. I don't believe in religion, you know. You have heard me talk for twenty years; but I believe in boys being brave, and truthful, and magnanimous, and I am going over there to tell them some good stories." And he went over there where the boys were gathered from the slums, and when they began on him—they were rats—he said: "Boys, you must decide this matter; you must stop, or I'll take my hat and go." And they stopped and looked at him, and they saw the light of love in his deep, clear blue eyes, and they listened to his story. Slowly he won them to goodness and truth. He

went on thus for some time, and one day a man came to him and said: "Everything you have is gone!" And he said: "Let it go; you will find the deed for my house yonder in the drawer; there is not much here, anyhow." It was to him as though her spirit hand, reached down from the deep blue heavens, beckoned him to be away, and he whispered: "She has found me, and God has found me, and I have found myself, and I am going to the eternal life." He lost on the outside; he gained on the inside.

One word and I am done. I suppose the average business man—the average successful business man—regards his preacher as a mere novice in book-keeping; and yet I say here this morning that the system of bookkeeping pursued in this country and England is the most incomplete system that could well be devised. The system of single and double entry bookkeeping used in business offices is not adequate to the business of life. You have no account in your books that is opened in this way: "Outside gains, inside losses." You have never yet opened up that account. And there is another account: "Outside losses, inside gains." You have not the courage to take off a balance sheet from that kind of book. Where is the man who will do it? Where is the man who will open such a system of bookkeeping as that, and take off a quarterly balance sheet? Where is the man who knows how to charge

up on that system of bookkeeping, to the account of profit and loss, the real gains and the apparent losses, and the real losses and the apparent gains? Will you learn the new system of bookkeeping? All these outside things are going from you. All these outside things are slipping away. You are casting them as a serpent sloughs his skin, as a bird moults her feathers. All these outside things are going—the flesh life is giving way. For you the scaffolding will soon be taken down and laid in the grave. Nothing is sure but the heavens and what they contain, God and the eternal life, spirit and its destiny. Begin to keep your books right. Begin to learn so to lose as evermore to gain.

Hear, therefore, the words of the Lord: "Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it. For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?"

## GOD SEEKING MAN

"I have sent also unto you all my servants the prophets, rising up early and sending them, saying, Return ye now every man from his evil way, and amend your doings, and go not after other gods to serve them, and ye shall dwell in the land which I have given to you and to your fathers: but ye have not inclined your ear, nor hearkened unto me."—Jer. 35. 15.

"Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins."—1 John 4. 10.

THE history of religion may be studied from two sides, or from two points of view—the human side and the divine side; from the standpoint of the natural and the standpoint of the supernatural. From the human side religion may be defined as the effort of man to find God. "O, that I knew where to find him, that I might come even to his seat! I would fill my mouth with arguments, and order my cause before him!" This has been the cry of confused, perplexed, guilty, suffering, aspiring men, in all ages and in all lands. In his search after God man has ever been pursued and haunted by the thought that he dare not venture alone, unshielded, and unhelped, into the Eternal Presence; that he might safely present himself before God only through the interposition of some priest, or sacred

ceremony, or visible church, or external rite. Feeling his weakness, confessing his ignorance, oppressed with a sense of his infirmity, burdened with guilt and uncleanness, he has seldom dared to believe that God was better pleased with a broken and contrite heart than with burnt sacrifices, costly gems, or ascetic austerities. Man has indeed, be it said to his honor and glory, never entirely ceased to believe that God was his Father, that he was made for God, and the effort on his part has been a long, painful, and laborious one to carry his frail manhood up to conscious union with the Divinity.

Most religions have been organized, and have taken their distinctive quality by constantly assuming that man is to seek God. The Christian religion has suffered beyond calculation by false teaching in this regard. I was brought up to believe that in my natural and unregenerate state God was removed from me an immeasurable distance, that he regarded me with extreme displeasure and repugnance, and that he would come near to me only after I had passed through certain experiences of conviction, contrition, self-abasement, repentance, trust, and conversion. This was not taught me in any formal or deliberate way, but these words truly describe the total effect upon me of the religious influences that played in upon my life and spirit when I was a boy. I was estranged from God; God was widely alienated from me; the agent of separation and alienation

was sin. While I continued in sin God would not, and could not come to me, and I could hope for his presence and help only after I had set myself to be delivered from its guilt and power.

Such a view of the relation of God to weak, imperfect, developing, willful men I now know to be erroneous, certainly partial and misleading, containing a sufficient amount of truth to make the error always pernicious and hurtful, and sometimes deadly. As I grew older it pleased God to cause the truth gradually to dawn upon me that he was seeking me much more than I was seeking him. I am now joyously confirmed and established in this conviction, it is the health and strength and light of my spirit, and to my mind there is no other reasonable or defensible statement of the relation and disposition of God to the moral beings dwelling upon this globe. When one considers what human life actually is in the world, the conditions under which men are born and live, the great forces that play upon them, the nature of the influences that mold them and give them knowledge and direction from their earliest years; when one considers how slowly men come to a knowledge of themselves, and especially to a moral knowledge of themselves, how tardily they come to the use and mastery of their spiritual powers and being, he is constrained to believe that, the Author of creation being considerate, just, merciful, and benevolent, he must be seeking,



by all means and forces, the rescue of his children. The contents of all deep religious experience point in the same direction the more closely and ingenuously they are studied; and it is the joy of the religious heart to say, "I love him, because he *first* loved me."

This certainly is the teaching of the Holy Scriptures. The general truth they contain is, not that man by searching found out God, or by any self-imposed moral disciplines could fit himself for high and perfect communion with God, but that God, impelled by his holy love, must from the very beginning have been seeking the spiritual unfolding of his children. This is the true impression to make on the mind of a child—that it is forever pursued by God's love. I am sure that a reasonable religion (and only a reasonable religion is possible to reasonable beings) imposes upon us the duty of instructing men that God is seeking them more than they are seeking God.

The interpreting experiences of the years have strengthened this view, especially when the light of interpretation is that which breaks forth from the Holy Word. This is the only satisfactory view to be obtained by a plain person from an open study of the Word of God; and by an open study of the Word of God I mean the diligent and devout reading of the Bible from beginning to end, without note or comment, just as we have it in the established



English version. The truth I seek to disclose and emphasize to-night is this: That the Christian religion teaches that God is engaged in a search after man much more than man is engaged in a search after God. To begin with the beginning, let us consider that account of our entanglement in evil, commonly styled "the fall," which, I take it, is a parable, an inspired parable, a parable after the fashion of the parable of the prodigal son—full of truth, just as that is—but a parable nevertheless. In that parable which recounts how we became ensnared with evil, after the evil had been consented unto and become actual transgression, what does Adam do—seek God? Nay, he hides from him, and God seeks Adam. The first cry is not on the part of Adam groping after a lost and alienated God, but the mercifulness of God is manifested in the coming into the garden of the Lord to find Adam. That is the first act in the history of divine love, in its long battle with sin on this globe. Pass over the intervening years, and come to the account of the time of Noah: did the people of that time seek God? Or, did not God seek them through Noah? did he not make him a preacher of righteousness unto them for many years, and was it not the constant divine effort to save them from the coming peril? And when the final catastrophe came, God saved the race in Noah. Well, now, Noah was not a singularly perfect example of an ideal type of spiritual man-

hood. Noah was relatively a good man, just as men are good when you measure them by their light, their opportunities, their times. He was a good Bible man: the Bible is the best book in the world to study men; it always tells the truth about men; it is the only book I have in my library that does; it is the only book that has the courage to speak out the full truth on all subjects at all times; it is not afraid to tell us what kind of men Adam and Noah were, and it represents God as seeking the people through Noah, and not the people seeking God through Noah. We come down to later times, to that remarkable figure that stands at the head of the Jewish history. When we speak of Abraham, what do we say? We speak of "the call" of Abraham, and we mean God called Abraham, not that Abraham called God. Abraham, wandering in Chaldea and Mesopotamia, in the land of ancient, gorgeous, seductive idolatries, did not seek and find God, God sought and found him. That is the undoubted historic truth; either that is true or the Bible is false, either there was a revelation to Abraham, and a call of Abraham by the Divine Being, or there is no necessity for a supernatural revelation, for, if a man, circumstanced as was Abraham, could find God, could satisfy himself of the truth of one God, and of the falsity of idolatry, so could a hundred men. In Abraham, as in Adam and Noah, we find God seeking man, not man seeking God.

Consider the case of Moses—who sought him? God did. When he fled from his duty the first time, and was keeping sheep in the region of the mountains of the Sinaitic peninsula, whose voice did he hear? The voice of God calling unto him from out of the midst of the burning bush, saying, “Moses, Moses.” . . . We come down to the era of the Hebrew prophets, to Samuel, the founder of the prophetic order, and when he was a lad of twelve years of age in the temple God spoke to him; God found him, he did not find God; God sought him, and through him the nation. When we come down to the time of Isaiah the lesson is the same. He is in the temple, a young man thirty years of age, when suddenly the hidden glory shines before his eyes. What is the teaching of that wonderful vision? It is this: that after the lips of Isaiah had been cleansed, and there was silence in the temple, the first voice heard is the voice of the Lord, saying: “Whom shall I send? Who shall go for us?” What is that? God seeking man through the mediation of a holy prophet, a prophet made holy by God himself. And then in the passage I read to you from Jeremiah, it is sharpened, epitomized, and intensified: “I have sent also unto you all my servants the prophets, rising up early and sending them, saying: Return ye now every man from his evil way, and amend your doings, and go not after other gods to serve them, and ye shall dwell in the land

which I have given to you and your fathers: but ye have not inclined your ear, nor hearkened unto me."

We approach the great central fact of the Christian religion, the fact of the incarnation; and what do we find—man ascending to God, or God descending to man? The deep and solemn truth of the incarnation is that after prophets had been sent, and holy men had been sent, the Divinity himself, veiled in the flesh, voluntarily submitted to the conditions of the earth and time-life, and all this for moral purposes. It is God seeking men. He in whom this incarnation was effected, disclosed and taught this same truth: "I am come to seek and to save the lost; I am come to find the guilty, to heal the sick, to save the wretched."

Now, is it not a very remarkable thing, when you come to reflect upon it, that instead of establishing a great school, or a great society, or a great building in Jerusalem and surrounding himself with the best men of the nation, receiving people in formal and regular order as they were presented to him, he seldom visited Jerusalem at all, that he went out after men, men of all sorts, that he invited and secured the love of the worst men, that the lowest and vilest were at home in his presence? And yet, that is the story of the incarnation. Nor has he long ascended into heaven until he calls Paul, and his first mission was his last mission: "I will send you far forth unto the Gentiles." Christianity breaks

the bounds of Judaism, and what does that mean? God spreads everywhere the glad tidings. Again it is God seeking men, and not men seeking God.

Thus have I opened to you, with necessary brevity, the true doctrine of the Word of God. They who teach us that because of the sin of a remote ancestor, whose guilt, passing over from generation to generation, comes now upon our heads, we are cut off from the love of the Father who made us; that because of the sin of a man who lived thousands of years ago, and with whom we have no kind of responsible moral connection, the everlasting Father is removed from us at an immeasurable distance, and that he will not come near us until we have turned ourselves about and have made ourselves fit and worthy to be received by him, such teachers, I say, do violence not only to separate passages of the Word of God, but to its whole blessed spirit from Genesis to Revelation, for if the Bible does not teach that God is perpetually seeking man, that the divine love antedates human love, I do not know what it was intended to teach. This is its undisguised, unmistakable message from God to man, "I have loved thee with an everlasting love."

There are some lessons growing out of this condensed statement of scriptural truth worthy of our serious thought and worthy to be carried with us from this place to the battle ground. The first is that sin, the separating element between God and

man, is at once an alien intrusion and a grave peril. There is a philosophy growing up in these latter days teaching that sin, or moral evil, is not very clearly distinguishable from imperfection, from ignorance, from infirmity; that the problem being given how to evolve from animal conditions to spiritual conditions such a race as this, what we call sin is a necessary transitional phase of that experience. If this teaching be true, if this be a part of the final philosophy of the universe and of man, then sin is a blessing and we should honestly say so; if man cannot reach his ultimate destiny save by passing through the experience of sin, if sin be a necessary part, a divinely appointed element in his spiritual development, and not a foreign and alien element—then I see no further use for battling with evil, either in our own hearts or in the world. But I know sin to be an intrusion, because God himself is seeking man to save him from it. If the experience of sin is a mere temporary phase of human development, God would allow things to work themselves out: such a philosophy cannot keep its place for an hour in company with any genuine belief of the divine origin or spirit of the Christian religion. The two are mutually exclusive. The whole matter reduces itself to this statement: the Christian religion is false or this philosophy is false, for the Christian religion represents God as seeking man always and everywhere to save him *from* sin. So,

then, sin is an intrusion. If you ask me to explain the precise method of the intrusion, I am dumb; if you ask me to go into the ultimate questions of the why and the wherefore, my mouth is closed. I see only a little way; I am beginning to see far enough to be more reverent than I used to be; I see far enough to know that sin is an actual and deadly enemy, and that it is not a part of God's eternal plan and work. The solution of the problem of its existence, its reconciliation with the divine power and goodness—what shall I say to these questions? "My soul, hope thou in *God*, for I shall yet praise him, who is the health of my countenance and my God."

Not only does this search after man demonstrate that sin is an intrusion, but that it is a peril. Either there is peril in human life, great peril, vast peril, immeasurable peril, or God would not take the pains he has taken, and is taking, to save men. There must be some danger in living, or God would not be so intensely solicitous that men should live right. When I go down to examine a steamer and they show me the water-tight compartments, and explain their purpose, when they show me this and the other parts of the steamer, and tell me how strong they are, that they may be able to resist the violence of the storm, when they show me the life boats and explain that they are equal in capacity to the number of passengers, when they point out the



life-preservers and explain that there are more than enough for all on board—I conclude that there is some peril in crossing the Atlantic Ocean. And when I see all that God has done, when I study the history of the race and of human life, and when I look out on the world as I see it about me, I conclude that the man who imagines that it is a matter of indifference how he lives here is either insane or is so silly as to be unable to think. There is peril in human life. No peril! How then do you explain the sad wrecks of human life? O! man, open your eyes, and look about you! There is peril, close peril, constant peril, fearful peril, vast peril, immeasurable peril!

It is the high and peculiar glory of the Christian revelation that it reveals God as seeking man, and as seeking him for the highest spiritual and redemptive ends. In all this search of God after man it is remarkable that the truth finds no place, no clear, distinct, recognized place, in any system of religion known to us, except the Christian religion. It has been stated recently, on high authority, that one of the distinctive marks of the Christian religion is that it represents the Divine Being as seeking man to save him, while all other religions represent man alone, distressed, guilty, trying in the night to find God. There is no other religion known to us that tells us that the great heart of God perpetually yearns after us; there is no other religion that re-

veals to us the blessed truth that for weak and guilty men there is a divine yearning, and tenderness, and compassion, that our God is a Shepherd, seeking his lost sheep on the mountain. That is the peculiar glory of the Christian religion.

In this revelation it is nowhere intimated (and this is another indication of what I may call the intellectual and philosophical sanity of the Bible), there is no suggestion or hint that God in his search after man ever sought him save for spiritual purposes. You look at the products of our civilization, go into any of our great cities, and what have we here that God sought us in order to give to us? The elements of the science of political economy were not revealed to men—men found them out for themselves. There never was any book dropped down from heaven containing the proper method of civic life. Where is the work on hygiene that God gave to man? We had to find that all out for ourselves. God never gave us a work on the vegetable kingdom. Where is the picture that God painted for us? These houses we build—we had to learn to build them ourselves. How did we find out the economic uses of lightning? Did God tell us that? We searched it out for ourselves. There was no revelation to us of the science of botany; there were the flowers, and we studied them to ascertain their laws. None of these things did God bring to us in his search to save us. God was seeking us in order to

redeem us from falseness, impurity, selfishness, animalism; and knowing that his sons and daughters were strong enough to do the rest for themselves, he left us to do it.

We see now the true purposes of the offices and institutions of religion in the world. Religion is the union of man with God; the binding of man's spirit to God. The offices and institutions of religion are visible churches, symbolic ceremonies, the setting apart of certain days for the performance of certain religious duties, the administration of the sacrament, the public instruction of the people in matters that pertain to spiritual life, prayer, song, music—all these are of the nature of the offices and institutions of religion. But now, what are they for? They are to seek men. That is what God does. And whenever a church, whenever a pulpit, whenever men and women who have organized themselves together for the purposes of religion forget that their chief business is to seek men, they are wronging and grieving the Spirit of God. Suffer me, my brethren, to fasten this truth upon your hearts. How many of you are seeking men? How many of you are seeking men for religious purposes? How many of you within a year have sought any man with entire reference to influencing him religiously? How many of you are doing it now? How many of our churches are content, either to give this whole work to the preacher, and thus make it official and pro-

fessional on his part, or else to leave it undone? How few churches in these large cities to-day are directly and earnestly engaged in seeking men as God seeks men! A large majority of them are supinely and selfishly waiting for men to seek the church. This is a precise reversal of God's method, and the church that is not engaged in seeking men is out of sympathy with the heart of the eternal God in his ceaseless work for the rescue of his children.

We find God very naturally and simply; we find God by amending our ways and doing those things which are well-pleasing in his sight. "How shall I find God?" does some man ask? "What is necessary for me to believe concerning baptism? There is a difference of opinion concerning baptism; what shall I believe in order to find God? There are many churches in the community; which one shall I join in order to find God? There are many doctrines in the different churches; how many of these, and what particular doctrines, must I believe in order to find God? There are many opinions concerning inspiration and the authority of the Bible; what must I believe in order to find God?" My brother, you can find God by simply amending your life and doing those things that are pleasing to him. You can find him to-night that way. I am talking to men whom he has sought for many years! He began to seek them in their childhood when strange voices from afar came to them, and alas! now they think

those were foolish voices! He sought you through the devotion, the piety, the self-sacrifice, the noble virtues, and the sweet graces of your father and mother, and they are now waiting for you in the invisible life. He has sought you since by the smile and love and trust of your child. He has sought you in life's stormier and more tragic experiences when you felt yourself alone. He has sought you in the services of the church, in the glow of its worship, in the rush of its song, in the uplift and outlook of its spiritual communion. He has sought you as you meditated at even-tide, or wandered by the sea. He seeks you now. He has sought you all your life, and in ways without number. He calls again. O, hear him! O, heed him! O, find him! O, open your hearts to his holy, cleansing, peace-giving love!

## THE GOD OF COMFORT

"The God of all comfort."—2 Cor. i. 3.

It is clear that to the apostle Paul God was neither a perhaps nor a mental abstraction. If I should say that Paul was a theist, that he believed in one God, the Creator of all things, and the Supreme Ruler of men, you would at once feel that this language was mild and inadequate, that it was too cold, formal, philosophical, to express the deep intimacy, the glorious commerce of Paul's spirit with the invisible Father and Lover of men. Paul did not so much believe certain things about God as he saw God, and lived in the glad and open knowledge of him. He did not so much comprehend God as he apprehended him, first being apprehended of him. The God of the apostle Paul's love and devotion was not vague, or shadowy, or unreal, or distant, or metaphysical, or philosophical, but a God nigh at hand, open, approachable, helpful, companionable, a near and dear and intimate friend, and all this, as you must have observed by reading his letters in the New Testament, without any letting down, weakening, or degradation of the idea of God. How inviting, how gracious, and how precious is the idea and thought of God in the magnifi-

cent and swelling doxology of the context: "Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timothy our brother, unto the church of God which is at Corinth, with all the saints which are in all Achaia: Grace be to you and peace from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ. Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God." How shall one fitly describe this winsome and attractive unfolding of the divine nature! Here we are in the presence of something more than a skillful Manipulator of plastic matter; we are in the presence of something more than the decorative Artist of the vast azure dome above us; we are in the presence of something more than the Framers of the worlds; we are in the presence of something more than the Mechanical Engineer of the universe; we are in the presence of something more than the relentless Punisher of disobedient men; we are in the presence of something more than the stern Vindicator of abstract moral order; we are in the presence of a Heart, an oceanlike Heart, that sends out the tides of its love everywhither, a Heart that feels, a Heart that throbs with love, a patient Heart, a rescuing Heart, a cleansing Heart, a soothing, solacing Heart. As a fountain of water in a



waste and arid desert to the traveler whose lips are burning with thirst, so are these words to countless thousands of fainting and famishing souls. They are like the gentle caress of the divine mother in the holy hush of the summer's eventide, when her child is weary, impatient, and fretful. They are like peace after strife, they are like rest after weariness, they are like love and hope after trouble and doubt. Have you ever, after a day of harassing care and wearing toil, your hands and feet chill, limp, lifeless, your brain quick, hot, feverish, your sleep uneasy, fitful, restless, disturbed by frightful dreams—have you ever, at such a time, at midnight, floating on the sweet air, heard now and then, as if from afar, soft strains of delicious music, and you were soothed and tranquilized, and fell off into a deep, untroubled sleep? O, to how many lonely, anguish-smitten, troubled, careworn, restless souls have these words come as though they were a part of the song that angels sing in heaven! “Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, *and the God of all comfort*, who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God.”

Comfort has for its presupposition imperfection, weakness, infirmity, pain, distress, suffering. If these words are fictions of the imagination, if there

be no mental conditions or states or experiences corresponding to them, if it be not true that there are such conditions as misery, need, helplessness, loneliness—then the word “comfort” ought not to be in our language, and the idea denoted by the word should lapse from our thought. Comfort, to define it more closely, is the solace, the relief, the refreshment, the encouragement, brought to those who are in any trouble, or weakness, or pain, or yearning, or need. This disposition resides in God. The impulse and the power to solace the distressed, to strengthen the weak, to give light to the darkened, to give help to the needy, to comfort the troubled, is of the eternal disposition of God. It is a necessary and abiding element of his nature. Nor is its disclosure confined to the New Testament. What says the royal Psalmist: “Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they *comfort* me.” What is the word of the Lord to the evangelical prophet? “Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God. Speak ye comfortably unto Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned.” What saith the same prophet in another place? “As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you; and ye shall be comforted in Jerusalem.” And when the disciples, shrinking, disconsolate, fearful, gathered on that terrible night

about the Lord, and he would put in one word all that he intended to give them as an atonement for his absence, he said, "I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another *Comforter*, that he may abide with you forever." And again, "I will not leave you comfortless; I will come to you."

"My Father worketh hitherto, and I work." God is busy, but he is not busy as a great many men imagine him to be. I suppose he is busy making new worlds and systems and suns and universes. I suppose he is perpetually bringing into being new forms of life, but it is as easy for our God to do these things as for a gifted boy with a sharp knife and a deft hand to make a windmill. I suppose that God is busy; but he is not busy as the superintendent of a factory is, running hither and thither to look after every detail; he is not busy as an engineer is, piling in fuel and oiling the wheels all the time so that the machine can go. When God makes worlds he does not need to be mending them every few days; they go themselves, and always will until they reach their final destiny as appointed in his mighty thought. Nor is he busy, as many have seemed to imagine, playing the spy on men, slyly watching them, eager to detect them in weakness and willfulness, so that he may pounce upon them in swift and remediless vengeance. Yes, God is busy, but he is busy sending his angels everywhither to carry good tidings to the weak; he is busy heal-

ing the broken-hearted; he is busy comforting all that mourn; he is busy opening the prison doors to them that are bound; he is busy striking off the chains of those who are slaves; he is busy in giving the oil of joy for mourning, beauty for ashes, and the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness. What would you think of a mother who was so busy with the economic arrangements of her household, so busy in the kitchen, so busy in the dining room, so busy with the scrubbing, and cooking, and washing, and ironing, so busy with her various social duties, that she had no time left for her children, and entirely yielded them to the care of a nurse? Well, now, am I to fashion my idea of God from such a mother? Am I to believe that God is one who has handed us over to nurses, while he is busy with laws, and forces, and globes, and suns, having no time directly to communicate with his children? God is one who gives to his children somewhat of his own being and life, which is precisely what every true mother gives to her child. So God mothers men and women—puts into them his life to bring them to the full stature and growth of the divine life.

The God of comfort is peculiarly and distinctly the scriptural and Christian God. There is no clear, distinct sign anywhere else that there is such a God. So far as conscience is a revealer of the secrets of the Divinity, it affords not the faintest glimmer of

a prophecy that the moral Ruler of men is a God of comfort. You take the conscience and analyze it, and make your analysis searching and exhaustive, and what does the process reveal to you? In brief, this, that man possesses a sense or faculty that enables him to discern what we call the moral quality of actions; that this sense or faculty so reveals to man the moral quality of actions as to bind him to the same in some close, mysterious way; that when we recognize the obligation and perform the duty, we experience a peculiar satisfaction; that when we despise the obligation, and seek our own willful way, it punishes us with the feeling of remorse. This is, in substance, what conscience tells us. There is no prophecy in conscience that there is a divinity that rescues guilty or that comforts penitent men, for there is no rescue or comfort in conscience except when we go right. Nor is there in nature, through its physical processes, any indication whatever of a God who comforts men and women. What is the law of nature? Stated briefly, stated in the language of the people, and, therefore, stated tersely, the general law of nature is "big fish eat little fish." The last word of the most advanced science concerning nature may be found in the pet phrases of evolution. Let us not be afraid of them, for it would seem that they have come to stay. Let us look at one or two of them. The first one is "the struggle for existence." That

would not indicate that nature is a helpful, solacing, rescuing mother; that would indicate that so far as nature was concerned, life means fight. Another phrase of this advanced science is that in this struggle for existence, "the strong survive, and the weak go to the wall." Is there any pity there? Is there any compassion there? Is there any comfort there? That may be all very good for the strong man who throws his weak brother against the wall, but what about the weak brother who is thrown against the wall? What is to become of him? Is there any hope for him? He did not ask to come here, he was not consulted before he was born, he was not advised with as to whether he should come here and try it—and in the name of eternal equity, is it right thus to crush him, and grind him to powder? Is there no hope, no love, no comfort for him anywhere in the vast universe? There is not in nature, for nature gives the victory to the strong and enduring. Is there a single gleam of compassion in the phrase "the survival of the fittest"? There is to the fittest, but what about the unfit? Where is the indication in nature of the mother element in the universe? Where is the prophecy in nature of a pitying, rescuing, healing heart? There is none anywhere. What does nature say? "Keep my laws, and I will bless you, I will enrich you, I will strengthen you, I will give you power and victory; disobey my laws, and I will pursue you, and hunt

you out, I will smite you, I will make you pay the extreme penalty." That is the voice of nature. Where is there any convincing, satisfactory evidence of this compassionate element in the Divinity outside of the Bible? Is it in any of the pagan literature that has come down to us? Is it to be found in any work of philosophy? Do you find it written on the great rocks of the prehistoric ages? Is there any prophecy of it in that time when one animal ate up another? Where is there any comfort for weak and struggling men at the bottom of society? No hope at all, except in the God who gave us the Bible, and in the Bible that gives us that God.

This revelation of God is exquisitely adapted to pressing human need. Do you ever think of the great world at all? Do you ever go outside of your own home, of the comparatively narrow circle of your own life and look abroad? This is a world that needs to be comforted by somebody. It is easy for the people on Prospect Heights and Clinton Avenue and Columbia Heights, it is delightful for them every morning after breakfast (as I suppose they all do), to go upstairs to the parlor, and read a portion of the Bible, and kneel on the rich carpet, and say among other things: "Give us this day our daily bread." When have they been without daily bread in abundance? They have always had enough and to spare, and they have never known



what it was to want. What a luxury it is to pray under such circumstances! But it means something else when an abandoned wife and desolate mother on an uncarpeted floor, with no fire, and after a breakfast of crusts, gathers her children about her, and says: "Give us this day our daily bread." *That* prayer finds God, for a woman's heart is in it. This is a world that needs comfort. How many poor people there are, how many weak people, how many sick people, how many worn and weary invalids confined to their single room, one, two, four, five, six, ten years! This is a world that needs to be comforted. How many fathers and mothers have their hearts crushed by the vices and crimes of their children and of whom we may say, "It would have been better for them if their children had never been born"! How many blind people there are, how many deaf people, how many crippled people, how many decrepit people, how many lonely people, how many guilty people, how many homeless outcasts! This is a world that needs somebody to comfort it, for it is deeply smitten with anguish, and through the darkness men are lifting up their hands to touch an Unseen Hand, striving to carry their hearts to where the Divine Love may enter and give them comfort and hope, peace and rest. This has always been the way. This is not a new and peculiar need of the nineteenth century. Men have always needed a sympathetic Divine

Helper. Do you ever wonder why it was that in all the mythologies of ancient times they had goddesses as well as gods? Did you ever reflect on what might be the best explanation of the presence of female deities in these hoary idolatries? Men needed comfort just as much as they do now, and the strong masculine deities, Jupiter, and Thor with his great smiting hammer, and Woden—where was there pity or love for the weak and suffering in such gods? And so they made goddesses, deities that had in them the feminine instinct of mercy and compassion and pity and sympathy. We have a more striking illustration of the operation of the same principle in the history of the Christian church. What is the origin of Mariolatry? What is the explanation of the strange fact that for a thousand years men and women on the continent of Europe took their sorrows, their troubles, their guilt, their anguish, and their fears to Mary rather than to Mary's divine Son? Because the great theologians, after Christianity had become dominant in the Roman empire, began to define Christ and state who he was, what relation he sustained to the Father and to universal government, and so they refined upon him, abstracted him from the people, and made him metaphysical and unreal, separating him from life and making him a mere official, governmental Christ, until the poor, the struggling, the untaught could not find him, and then they thought

of his mother, and they said, "Holy Mary, mother of God, pray for us." That is the explanation of it. Men must have comfort: they hunger for it and will perish without it; and this Christian revelation of the God of all comfort is exquisitely adapted to sharp and pressing human needs.

Who is God? What is God? What are the relations he sustains to men? You remember how one day, as Jesus was passing along the street in Capernaum, he saw a man named Matthew, a publican, and probably an extortioner, sitting at the seat of custom. Jesus said, "Follow me," and immediately he arose, left all, and followed him. Matthew, it seems, had amassed some wealth in his business, and the first proof he gave of his devotion and loyalty to the Master was to give him a great feast in his house, inviting a kind of nondescript company to meet him there, strange men and stranger women. When it was noised abroad in Capernaum, and the good people there, the regular people, the conventional people, heard of it, they gathered on the outside where they could whisper into Peter's ear, and John's ear (they took good care not to say anything directly to the Lord), saying: "Ah! I see your Master eats with publicans and sinners." But he knew it and said: "They that be whole have no need of a physician, but they that are sick; I am not come to call the righteous [like you], but sinners to repentance." What a God! A Shepherd

God, searching after the lost, carrying the weak in his arms! A Physician God, seeking the sick and diseased, to heal them with the medicine of love! What a God! The Friend of the friendless, the Home of the homeless, the Strength of the weak, the Guide of the lost, the Mother of us all.

Such a God shall yet be hailed, as he is now by those who stand yonder, the crowned Head of the universe, for he is greater in the power of his ocean heart to bless all shores of being than he is to make worlds, or fresco with exquisite beauty the crystalline dome above us.

Are you weary? Are here any in distress? Are here any who need consolation? Are here any who need guidance? Are here any who need to be refreshed by the way? Are here any in ill health, in grief, in poverty, in loneliness, in apprehension? Are all earthly sources of balm, and solace, and strength, and hope, and gladness dried up? Then bring your troubles to God, and lift them up before him. Let his love shine first upon them, and then through them, and at last that love will shine them all away!

“If our love were but more simple,  
We should take Him at his word;  
And our lives would be all sunshine  
In the sweetness of our Lord.”

What time you are afraid, put your trust in him. Hear the triumphant words of the great apostle:

“If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? Who shall lay anything to the charge of God’s elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea, rather that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? Nay, in all these things, we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded”—and no wonder that the soldier on the field of Gettysburg died murmuring these great words—“for I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.” Trust ye in the Lord forever, for in the Lord Jehovah there is everlasting strength!

## THE SPIRIT OF THE GOSPEL

“For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.”—Luke 19. 10.

JESUS was again and again put on his defense by the open or covert attacks of the religious leaders of his nation and time. They charged him with being a heretic in doctrine, propagating dangerous and fatal errors, and with being loose and questionable in his practice. He was charged, for example, with abrogating or seeking to undermine the authority of the Mosaic law; and in the eyes of the men who made this charge it constituted him as great a heretic, as we would deem one who should arise in the midst of the church to-day and seek to undermine the divine authority of the Bible.

This seems strange and repugnant to us, since Jesus has become not only the model of all our character building, and inspiration of our conduct, but it is from him, and his words, that we strive to derive all our creeds or statements of belief. He has become the recognized and infallible standard of orthodoxy with us. Nevertheless, in the days of his flesh, he was relentlessly pursued by these charges, and that, too, with increasing rancor and animosity, until he was fairly hounded to his death by these religious leaders.

So far as concerns the malicious insinuation made against Jesus, involving questionable moral conduct, the head and front of his offending would seem to have consisted in the familiarity with which he received, and consorted with, persons of doubtful or wicked reputation. Jesus never seemed anxious to protect or defend himself against the truth of these statements, but from the beginning to the end of his ministry acknowledged that his associations were with persons of tainted reputation, and he declared that he came to seek and to save just such people. The charge of evil associations was brought against him very early in his public career. Soon after he had called Matthew, the publican, as he was being entertained in his house in Capernaum, where also many publicans and sinners sat down with them, the Pharisees gathered and slyly and sneeringly uttered their evil charges to his disciples, "Your master eateth with publicans and sinners." Jesus, overhearing their words or divining their purport, at once took the case out of the hands of the bewildered disciples, and defended himself (so far as you may call it a defense) by acknowledging the truth of the accusation, and by declaring that he did not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance, and that the whole had no need of a physician, but the sick. In one memorable instance in his life, when he was teaching in the midst of a great crowd, it seems that the publicans and sinners



had elbowed their way through and passed the Pharisees, and scribes, and lawyers, and now constituted the innermost circle about his person, while the outer fringe of the crowd was composed of sneering and snarling Pharisees, who murmured against him because he thus received publicans and sinners. Then he delivered his three memorable and glorious parables, the parable of the lost piece of money, the parable of the lost sheep, and the parable of the prodigal son, again declaring that he had come to seek and to save the wicked, the vile, the outcast, the guilty. We now find him, toward the close of his ministry, passing through the city of Jericho, and Zaccheus, the wealthy publican of that city, does not venture to speak to him, but he calls Zaccheus from the sycamore tree and invites himself to his house to be entertained; and after the publican has declared either what has been, or what shall hereafter be the mode of his life, Jesus justifies himself for his familiarity with Zaccheus in the language of the text, "I am come to seek and to save that which was lost."

How did Jesus show that he came to seek and to save the lost? *First of all, by his unusual choice of a field of labor.* He chose the province of Galilee for the chief scene and field of his ministry, and he doubtless chose it, among other reasons, because it most needed his presence and works and words; because there he could most readily and surely find

the guilty; because there he could find the lost in the greatest numbers; because there he could be brought into direct contact with the very kind of human spirits that he hastened from the unseen glory to touch, to lustrate, to hallow, and to glorify with himself forever.

Not only so, but he manifested this spirit *in his selection of his disciples*, for he selected as his disciples men who were deemed ceremonially unclean by the Pharisees and the religious authorities of the nation. He chose not only plain men, poor men, humble men, unlettered men, but he chose men who were spiritually tough and hard to penetrate, and choosing them, he never wearied of them, or cast them off, but wrapped them round and round with his love to the very end.

It was manifested also *in the companionableness, the openness, the familiarity of Jesus with people*. I do not know how many such people he invited directly by name into his presence; that he did some, we know; but he invited many more by his gracious demeanor, by his spirit, by his warm and winning geniality. He invited them in crowds by the essence and flavor of his teaching, so that they thronged his footsteps and surrounded him wherever he was. If you will take your concordances, and look up the words "crowd," "crowds," "multitude," "many," "a great number," and similar words and phrases, you will learn that at one period in the ministry of

our Lord his whole life was lived in a perfect blaze of publicity, and the crowds that waited upon him were the despised common people of the oppressed land, guilty, ignorant, superstitious, shepherdless, far away from knowledge and virtue and spirituality and refinement.

He sought the lost *by the winning and benignant character of his purity*. Not simply by his *purity*, but by the quality, the nature of that purity! Purity with us is usually anything but winning or benignant; it is quite self-satisfied, almost to the point of pride; it is often self-inclosed; it is sometimes harsh and austere; it is very rarely mild, genial, healing, benignant, very rarely attractive and winning to the guilty and impure. The purity of Jesus was of a peculiar and striking character: it won *bad* people; it drew them into his presence to make humble, silent, wordless, but deep and genuine confession of their guilt; it shone on them as the warm breath of spring shall come to the brown fields. He came to that woman who rained her tears on his feet as the purest she ever knew, and what the results? Why, he gave her a new sense of the purity she had lost, and also a sense of the purity that was still open to her. This kind of purity, if there were enough of it in the world, would convert it in a short time. The winning purity, the genial purity, the healing purity, the benignant purity, is yet to come.

*the lost by his death.* Into the deep mystery of that holy death I do not seek at this time, or at any time, to penetrate deeply; I only know that it was a death for sin, and that it was a death for my sin; I know that it was a death for the sins of the wickedest, the worst, the most unclean, and that the reason he died, the ground and necessity of his death, so far as we have light now to see it (and this truth can never be changed), was because men were sinners. *If they had not been sinful, he had never died.* He did not die for holy angels, but for wicked men. Now, do we actually believe all this? Do we believe these things profoundly? Do we believe that his life and death was the life and death of GOD? Do we believe that this was the Spirit of Divinity? Do we believe that this picture of Love seeking the lost is the gospel? If so, let us learn some lessons:

1. The spirit and conduct of Jesus toward the lost supplies us with a test whereby we may ascertain the sincerity, the depth, the reality, and the fervor of our loyalty to him. Sometimes you give your heart a holiday—where does it go? To the weak? To the poor? To the outcast? To the needy and the suffering? To the lost? Where are your instinctive sympathies, with the refined, or with the gross; on the days that your heart is freed from its usual pressing, absorbing cares, do you naturally and spontaneously enter into sympathy with the

great under mass? Do you want to be real in your loyalty to Jesus? Do you want to have depth of loyalty to Jesus Christ? Do you want to have fervor of loyalty to Jesus Christ? Then learn that not rejoicing in the hope of heaven, not congratulating yourselves on your possible escape from hell, are evidences of the depth of your attachment to him; learn that you are truly his only when you keep his words, and drink in his spirit, and join the weaker and suffering side. Learn, then, that to be a genuine disciple of Christ means something more than going to church, something more than being a teacher or preacher, something more than publicly assenting to the doctrines of the church; that it means to do as he did in like or analogous circumstances, to be entered into his disposition, that, for example, in every question between the rich and powerful landlord and the tenement-house class, where love and justice and right are clearly with the class underneath, you must dare to be Christlike, and array yourself on that side, however losing, or dangerous, or unpopular it may be. Yes, and vice versa!

2. The example of Jesus furnishes us the true method of reaching the masses, always provided that we really want to reach them. This is a great question that is being discussed in our times—how to reach the masses. It seems to be very simple in the light of the example of Jesus: it is to go where

they are for the express purpose of reaching them. Are we trying to reach the masses that way? A distinguished clergyman was invited to deliver an address before a home missionary meeting in a large church in a certain Eastern city a few years ago, and the question that was being discussed was, "How shall we get the people to come to the churches?" And he told them (and he had the advantage in telling them of being fifty years of age, and consequently removed from the danger of having his opinions charged to the natural indiscretion of youth)—he told them the reason that people did not come to the church in which he was speaking, and to churches like it, was, to use his precise words, "You don't want them to come." And I take it that the reason why we do not reach the masses is that we do not want to reach them. It is a ready, simple, open, natural way. And now, that I may not write too bitter a prescription for you, let me write a prescription in your presence for myself: I suppose if the time should arrive in the history of my ministry when I became convinced I was not reaching the masses, and I was seized with a real, honest, fervent desire to reach them, that if I would follow Edward Judson's example, I could reach them, namely, resign the pastorate of a wealthy and influential church, and go where they are, and live among them, and work among them, enter into their toils and hardships, actually sympa-

thize with them. I take it that the way the laity of our churches can reach the masses is to go after them; to go after them in the spirit of Jesus; in the spirit of moral geniality; in the spirit of patience; in the spirit of gentleness; in the spirit of that purity which cleanses, and uplifts, and elevates, and saves. Well, I know who and what are reaching the masses—the forces and agents of evil are reaching them, and they go where they are; the dens of vice are reaching them, and they are put up in their immediate vicinity; the filthy papers are reaching them; they are sent to them, and their subscriptions are directly and urgently solicited; the devil reaches them constantly, effectively, ruinously. There is growing up, and it is constantly increasing, an alienation in the large cities of America between the people as we call “the masses,” and the visible church of God; an alienation dangerous, ominous, prophetic, especially so to all students of social drifts and tendencies, to all students, for example, of the history of *the causes of the great revolution in France*. When the time came that the oppressed and starving people could endure no longer and rose, they were as bitter against the church which had neglected and robbed them as they were against the aristocracy that had conspired with the church to brutalize them. If it ever shall be my good fortune to be permitted to speak to thousands of the class sometimes styled “workingmen,” or to any large



section of what may be styled "the masses," I trust that God will not find me lacking in courage to tell them their duties, to point out their vices, their errors, their prejudices; and to incite them to higher and nobler aims, to impart to them broader and better views. Just now it is my duty to speak to the church of God, and to call upon it in the name of its divine Founder and Redeemer, not to wait until the masses seek the churches to destroy them, but now, in his blessed spirit, to seek the masses to save them.

3. *The SPIRITUAL rescue of men, according to the divine estimation, is of immediate and sovereign importance.* It outranks, and is entitled to precedence over all other forms of work for the elevation, the enlightenment, and the perfection of human life. Suppose, now, that you should go into any of the most ignorant, most brutal, most degraded portions of these cities, and give them your books—or I will give them my books—and you will give them your pictures and a great many other like things, and we will set up houses like those we live in, and give them to them, and tell them, "There are books and pictures and houses," think you they would be redeemed from grossness? They would be exactly the same people that they are now. This idea that comfort and character and culture, this idea that the material products of civilization can be fastened on to people from the outside, and their evils alle-

viated, and the people cleansed, quickened, and elevated, is the world's theory of salvation, and it is radically and viciously false. If this be the true method, if the kind of houses people live in are decisive of their real growth and blessedness, if the laws of hygiene are to take precedence of the laws of morality and purity, then why did not Jesus, first of all, see to it that a proper treatise on architecture was given to the masses of the world? He never said one word about architecture. He gave no instruction on hygiene; he furnished no outline of the ideal scheme of education and culture. He did nothing but that which we think to be very simple, that is, to go about and hunt up bad men and try to love them into goodness; and yet that is God's plan of rescuing the world, and all the ages will never be able to suggest an improvement on the plan. Religion is the parent of thrift, of aspiration, of growth. Did I not once witness in an iron and mining town in Ohio the conversion to a religious life, in the Presbyterian and Methodist churches in the place, of a great many Welsh miners and workers in iron? And what was the result? Cleanliness, thrift, whitewashing and painting the fences, planting flowers, buying organs for the daughters, saving up money to send the gifted boy away to college, wearing better clothes! Religion came first, and all these things followed. The first thing to do in the direction of a perfect world is to rescue men

spiritually, and unite them to God, to fix them in his love and righteousness. This is God's own plan. Be sure, my friends, that his great nineteenth century can find no better way.

4. It is the office of *the highest and strongest love to serve the greatest need, and this is the deepest and most precious and most significant thought of this exposition.* Is that strange? It ought not to be strange; it is a very ancient truth; it is not contrary to analogy, it is not contradicted by reason, it does no violence to the best sentiments of the human heart. The highest love of which we know anything serves the greatest need. The holiest love of which we know anything serves that need the most divinely in hours of peril, or weakness and infirmity. Do we know on this earth any higher or holier or more perfect love than the mother's love? Do we know any higher or purer type of love than the love which serves a child because it needs it? Why does a mother love her babe? For what it is? For its accomplishments? For its skill? For its beauty? For its education? Why, it is nothing but a mere lump of flesh! She loves it and serves it because without her love it would perish. If, at night, the cry of "Fire" being raised, a mother should choose between two children, one bright and fair and strong, and the other weak and lame and blind, and should come down the stairway with the beautiful babe, and should leave the unsightly and deformed

child to perish in the flames, so has God made us that we are shocked at the act! The highest love of which we know anything is that which carries the greatest strength down to the most helpless weakness. We know no other *love*; everything else is passion. And then, when he comes who reveals to us what is the divine love, actually realized in a human life among men, that *he* does not stop at the holy and the wise and the pure, but that it is the law of God's eternal nature, the highest to serve the lowest, the strongest to seek the weakest, the holiest to cleanse the guiltiest—we have the culmination of all present revelations of the great, mighty, mysterious, glorious God, to whom, by all the church and by all men, be glory and majesty and might and power and dominion forever!

Is this religion soon to die out of the world? Think you that it is ageing, decaying, wearing out? Can you imagine men rising up against bread, against the fact of bread, declaring that they will have no more bread—that they are going to put it out of the world? I can imagine such a thing if it be poisoned bread, if it be puffed up with alum, if it be innutritious—I can imagine men declaring war against *that kind of bread*. Men do not rise in rebellion against the air. I can imagine men in rebellion against vitiated air, against polluted air, against poisoned air in tenement houses, in the factory, in the mine, in the shop, in the store; but not

against the fresh, pure air of heaven. I can imagine men rising up to drive a corrupt religion out of the world ; a disfigured religion ; a religion of poison and venom ; a false religion ; a caste religion. Against such a religion every good man should rise in rebellion. But a true religion—that is bread, and food, and light, and a staff, and a refuge, and a fortress, and a citadel, and strength, and righteousness, and peace, and everything that the human heart can ever desire in all its earthly experiences. I cannot imagine men rising up to drive such religion out of the world. And this is the religion of Him who came to seek and to save that which was lost.

## THE RELIGION OF LOVE

“And being in Bethany in the house of Simon the leper, as he sat at meat, there came a woman having an alabaster box of ointment of spikenard very precious; and she brake the box, and poured it on his head. And there were some that had indignation within themselves, and said, Why was this waste of the ointment made? For it might have been sold for more than three hundred pence, and have been given to the poor. And they murmured against her. And Jesus said, Let her alone; why trouble ye her? she hath wrought a good work on me. For ye have the poor with you always, and whensoever ye will ye may do them good: but me ye have not always. She hath done what she could: she is come aforehand to anoint my body to the burying. Verily I say unto you, Wheresoever this gospel shall be preached throughout the whole world, this also that she hath done shall be spoken of for a memorial of her.”—Mark 14. 3-9.

I THINK there can be no doubt of the sweet gentility and democratic companionableness of Jesus, and herein, as at so many points, he strikingly differed from the leading rabbis of his nation and time. What the touch of the Sutra, or low-caste Hindu, would be to the punctilious Brahman, the familiarity and daily companionship of the ignorant Jew would have been to the precise and orthodox rabbi. It was not so with our Lord; he was at home, not only with all classes of people, but all classes of people were quite at home with him—the rich people and the poor people, the great people and the lowly

people, the perfect people and the imperfect people. Not only so, but, however it may pinch us, he was with them of deliberate choice a great deal of the time, and must have actively encouraged them to come into his presence. It is very suggestive that Jesus worked the first miracle of his life in order to increase and prolong the festivity of a wedding occasion. I spent three or four years in the early part of my ministry, when I was lecturing on temperance quite as much as I was preaching the gospel, in seeking to explain and justify the miracle of the conversion of the water into wine. Now, I am glad it is there; I am glad that Jesus began his public ministry, not by interfering with the festivity of a wedding scene, but by adding to the joyousness. Matthew certainly understood that our Lord was social, for the very first thing he did after he was called to the discipleship was to provide a great supper for him, and invite thereto a large company of people.

We find our Master at a social entertainment the last week of his life, within three or four days of his death, perhaps the Tuesday evening of Passion Week. He is in the house of Simon the leper. There have been many surmises as to who this Simon was; he might have been the father of Lazarus, Martha, and Mary, and perhaps dead for some years; or he may have been the husband of Martha, and have been cured of leprosy by Jesus. There were many



people present, and they were eating after the Oriental style—the guests reclining on the couches, lying on the left side, with their feet out. Suddenly and quietly there stole up behind Jesus a woman who had in her hand an alabaster box of the oil of spike-nard, the costliest anointing oil known to antiquity. She either broke the seal or crushed the narrow neck of the bottle in her hand, and then poured the rich oil upon his head, and its grateful fragrance filled the room. Scarcely had the nature and costliness of the action become known to the men there—to the *men*, I say—until they began to have indignation within themselves. Before they spoke openly about it, they began inwardly to blame her. “Foolish woman, what does she understand about the Master? She did not hear his discourse the other day, when he told us we were to feed the poor. In an impulse of sentiment, she has gone and spent more than fifty dollars on a single flask of ointment, and in one moment threw it all away; such a purposeless waste as that! Think of all the good that could have been done with it; how many suffering people we could have helped with it!” Judas knit his dark brows closely and looked out of his sinister eyes with the look of one who was being consumed by avarice, and murmured the loudest of all; and then for the first time the woman began to doubt and hesitate, and shrink back, and to be troubled. And then he spake who always saw, and spoke the whole

truth: "Let her alone; she has wrought a good work on me. Why trouble ye her? She has done what she could; the poor are with you always; there will never be a time when you cannot help them, but I shall not be with you always; I soon go into the darkness and bitterness of death. Would you not anoint my dead body? Would you not make fragrant with spices and costly aromatics the place of my burial? The insight of this woman's love is only aforehand, and she has anointed me for my burial!" And then, looking around upon them all, with his usual most solemn form of speech, he said: "Verily I say unto you, wheresoever this gospel shall be preached throughout the whole world, there also this that this woman hath done shall be told for a memorial of her." The baffled traitor hastily rose from his couch, muttering to himself, "It is all over; he is no king; there is nothing to be made here;" and within the hour he was bartering with Caiaphas to sell him for thirty pieces of silver. But there was peace in the heart of the woman, as Christ has always given peace to the holy women with deep, unselfish love.

These men were very superserviceable in their care of the Lord. Some men, and a great many men, are not as wise as they think they are in taking care of the Lord's affairs for him, and in managing the concerns of his kingdom, especially when women and people of love and imagination and sen-

timent are to be dealt with. Doubtless these disciples thought they were managing all things well in protesting against the waste of the ointment, but their zeal was not according to knowledge. Here is a woman of love, of spiritual imagination and insight, a woman with the capacity of inspiration and poetry in her nature; but these disciples never did understand women, especially in their relation to Jesus, and the class of men who are of their lineage has not died out. Do you remember when the women came with their children and wanted Christ to put his hands on their heads, how the disciples waved them back? "Don't bother the Master; he has no time for such small matters; he is a great public leader and teacher, and is about establishing a great kingdom!" Do you remember when he made the journey into the coasts of Tyre and Sidon, and the woman of Canaan came out and wanted him to heal her daughter, and Jesus began to test her faith, how the disciples came to him and said: "Shall we send her away, she is crying out after us, and drawing a crowd?" That day when Jesus was in the temple, and the rich of their abundance were putting in their splendid gifts, the disciples never saw the lone poor woman come up, and he had to call them, and say, "Come here; she has just put in two mites, and it is more than any of them." Great is the arrogance of masculine conceit! I suppose you think you understand women; I think

you don't; I am sure I know one man who does not. Very ample is the treasure house of a holy woman's heart, and few men can estimate the preciousness thereof. Many years, deep experience, growing Christliness is required to understand a divine woman, and especially when that woman's love blossoms in religion.

There are a great many men who consider themselves elected to manage everything connected with the church of Christ on "business principles." I am growing weary of that phrase. I exceedingly dislike it at the beginning of a pastorate, and I am heartily glad that at the beginning of this pastorate I was not gravely informed that this church was conducted on business principles. The phrase, being interpreted, means that there is to be no enthusiasm, no glorious uplifts of soul, no sentiment, no love inspirations and impulses. In a certain church, on a certain Easter Sunday, a woman of wealth in the church presented a bouquet of choice flowers that cost fifty dollars, and not a few people in the church were in a state of perturbation because the money had not been given to the poor. The pastor announced at the evening service that all the people who desired to celebrate Easter by helping the poor with money might hand him their gifts at the close of the service, and not a single person remained to give him a dollar. The people who affect to despise sentiment and imagination and love in

religion are not the people who give the most to spread the gospel among the heathen, nor are they the people who give the most to the poor. There is a church on Commercial Avenue, Trade Town, managed on strictly business principles; they managed a poor shoemaker, who had been an exemplary disciple for years, back pew by pew, until finally they managed him out of the door. There was a church on Gold Place, Stock City, managed on business principles, and they finally succeeded in managing one of the noblest and saintliest women in it into the last seat in the rear gallery. Business principles are well enough in their way and place, but the spirit of religion streams from the cross of Christ. Tell me not that the spirit of commerce, of trade, of manufacture, as I see it in the world about me, is the spirit of Christ. It is much oftener the spirit of the devil! The cross stands for love, not for "business principles."

Room must be given in this world for the religion of love, and the inspirations of the religion of love. Cold, exact, calculating disciples are not to be permitted to frown Mary out of countenance. The religion of rule, of custom, of exactitude, the religion of precise definition, of correct thinking, of strict administration, of prescribed forms of worship, must not play the despot over the religion of loving insight and glowing devotion, over the religion that sees rather than defines, and worships

rather than argues. Men have a great time getting their religion fixed, so that it will give them no further trouble. As I study ecclesiastical history I see how often men have supposed that at last they had discovered the final form of the church, and the precise and ever-adequate instruments of religion; exactly what they ought to believe, and exactly how they ought to worship. They have it all fixed, but it never stays fixed, because some woman with the insight of love, or some man with the soul of a prophet is bestowed upon the church, and while at first they call such a man a fanatic, or a heretic, or a revolutionist, and I know not how many other dangerous names, nevertheless he sows the good seed, and the next generation thinks itself great, because it puts into logical forms his glorious imaginations. It is like a man who imagines that he can govern and does govern his household by rule, and so he fixes the rigorous rules. It may be all very well when the children are young, the boy five or six, and the girl eight or nine, and the baby five or six months; but after a while the boy is eighteen, and the girl is twenty-one, and he undertakes to control them by his rules. The boy stays out too late at night, and the last time he was out he was probably in a poolroom, and on some morning the father remains at home long enough to settle the matter once for all, and he issues his edicts to the effect that the boy must come in at just such a time, and never

more be seen in the poolroom, or he must go out of that door never to return. So he imagines that he governs his household by rule, but at the last moment, as he is about to leave, a little woman comes in, and laying her hand upon his, she says, "Henry, he is *our* boy, it is *our* home, and he is not going away from our home." "Well," he says, "I always thought it would turn out that way," and off he goes, not so much of an absolute dictator as he thought he was, and all the way over to his business he secretly blesses her wise love. Where is the man of rule and statute who has not more than once bowed to the inspirational love of woman?

Love has for its radical impulse the desire to communicate itself, the desire to make itself known; love is perpetually striving to express itself, either by word or action, or by some significant external token or sign. It has been ingeniously suggested by some one that this woman here was one whose love was deep, but whose tongue was tied—that is, she was a great lover and a poor talker, and that she was yearning, longing, striving in some way or other to express her love for Jesus. If it was Mary, as it probably was, she had indeed large ground for love and gratitude; Lazarus had been raised from the grave, and was with them at the feast. She had heard the vague rumors about his approaching death, and she had been striving for these months past to find some suitable expression



of her love, and had failed, when, seeing this alabaster flask of costly oil, she said: "They pour it on the heads of kings, and he is my King; they anoint princes with it, and he is my Prince; they give it to friends as a token of love, and he has found me, and I have found myself in him; I will break it and anoint his sacred head with the fragrant oil." This is the significance of gifts. What are gifts? They are the letters of the alphabet of love, and you could write its wondrous literature if once you could complete its alphabet; but you cannot. There are more than twenty-six letters in this alphabet; the alphabet is growing all the time; every loving gift is a new letter in the alphabet, and you cannot write this literature until the last letter is added to the alphabet, and that will be when the last wistful, trustful human heart has made the last outward sign of its deep inward love. Do you know how God strives to express his love? Have you ever looked at the sunrise in the morning? God is striving to express his love in that. Have you ever at night on the mountain top looked afar off on the silver lake shimmering in the moonlight? It is God, striving to express his love. Have you ever looked out on the sylvan landscape? It is God, striving to express his love. Have you ever, in a sequestered nook, plucked the sweet wild flower? It is God, striving to express his love. Christ and Christmas! The mystery of the Incarnation! In them God is

striving to express his love. Did you ever get all your love expressed? Did you ever, in the holiest hour of purest love, find the fitting and satisfying word? Have you ever found the gift that was complete, leaving no love unexpressed? And do you think that God's great love to us has been finally and wholly expressed, any more than ours to each other? His gifts stand for more love than we can measure or divine. The cross of God stands for a love so deep, so high, so vast, so rich, so mysterious, so unsearchable, that all earthly symbols and thoughts fall far short of the blessed reality.

"She hath come aforehand to anoint my body for the burying." Not many of us are beforehand with our love; most of us are behindhand. Joseph and Nicodemus were behindhand; they loved Jesus, but they were men, wise men, strong men, unsentimental men, and so they saved their spices for the dead body of Christ. They did not bring any love to him before he died, but as soon as he was dead Joseph became bold, and went in and craved his body, and wrapped it in fine linen, and they brought myrrh and aloes, a hundred pounds weight, for its anointing. How much better the woman's alabaster box of costly oil, the fragrance of which the living Christ scented! Does not our love need to learn to be beforehand? The most of us have some love, but we take care that it blossoms too late, and its fragrant exhalations often perfume only the grave

of the beloved. Sometimes when I go into a darkened parlor where the coffin is covered with flowers, and the air is heavy with rich odors, I wonder if they sent the dead man any flowers while he lived. We need to give men fewer flowers when they are dead, and more while they live. Neighbor A died last week, and two hard-hearted, heavy-witted, thick-skinned, covetous, selfish men met on the street car the next morning and spoke to each other of the sad event. After a silence one of them said: "That was a brave fight neighbor A made a few years ago to pay every cent. Did you ever say anything to him about it?" "No." "Well, I believe I forgot it myself; suppose we send some flowers up to the funeral." That is the love that blossoms too late. Yonder is the grave of a poor struggling woman; her husband never told her anything about his business, and when he died, instead of being worth twenty-five thousand dollars, ten days after the funeral the owner of the house came around and told the surprised woman that the rent was so much per quarter, payable in advance. She takes to keeping boarders, works hard, and has a close fight of it. She is a member of the church, but overworked, having no pew, she seldom comes out to church; she has trouble with her children, but she toils away, and bears the burden all alone, and after a while she dies from worry and heartbreak, and when it comes to the church that she is gone, what is said?

“Poor woman, she had a hard time of it; suppose we send some flowers around.” But they never sent any flowers around when the rent was to be paid; they never sent any flowers when the grocer and the butcher and the coal man were there with their bills; they were too busy to help her while she was making her brave fight, and so, as a kind of salve for their consciences, they will cover her coffin with flowers. That is the way we are killing people. That is the way they killed Frederick W. Robertson, of Brighton, the greatest preacher, in some respects, of the century; they killed him by coldness, by indifference, and suspicion. But after he was dead they gave him a noble memorial window, and perhaps a splendid monument, and so brought love to the brave, gifted, spiritual preacher, that saw fifty years ahead of his time! Do not let your love blossom too late; do not reserve all your flowers for the coffin; do not keep the perfume of your love for the grave only. I want no flowers on this senseless body. I want no flowers where it may sleep, but while I live, and work, and wait, and struggle, striving to set my face toward God and his love and holiness, then help me; after I am dead, God will find me an ample home and a fitting work.

No gifts are so fragrant as the gifts of love. The fragrance of the anointing oil may have been grateful to the Lord, but what he most appreciated was the deep love of this yearning heart. The shadows

were deepening about him, and nobody understood him; the people did not understand him, the chiefs of the temple party did not understand him, Peter, James, and John even did not understand him. He was alone in the world, and at last there comes a great-souled woman who does begin to understand him, one woman made rich in love by himself, and the expression of her love is grateful to the lonely Redeemer. There is nothing so grateful or penetrating or lasting as true love. They have a strange assortment of things in an invalid's room after all; sometimes the pastor, as the physician always, becomes acquainted with the contents of such a room, and I have seen the easy chair, and the tempting bit of food, and the choice and costly flowers; and I have been in an invalid's room when the children came in from the woods where they had been at play; I have heard them shout on the stairs, "O, auntie! the lovely things we've got for you!" And they open the door, and offer their gifts one after another, until at last the little wee tot, that can scarcely toddle, comes to the bed with some crushed red leaves in her hand, and says: "See, auntie, the pretty things I've got for you!" And it stands for love, and it is more to the invalid than all things else beside.

The great theologians of the Middle Ages were rich in angelogy, usually following the division into hierarchies and choirs of Dionysius the Areopagite,

who gave the first place to the seraphim and the next to the cherubim. The word "seraph" is derived from a Hebrew root signifying "to love," while the word "cherub" is derived from a Hebrew root signifying "to know," and so they taught that the angels of love stand nearer to God than the angels of knowledge. Following this classification, the great artists in their immortal pictures painted the seraphim, the angels of fire, of love, nearer the throne than the cherubim, the angels of blue, of light and knowledge. They were right, theologians and artists, for nothing is nearer to God than love, and no heart is so close to God as the loving heart. "She hath done what she could." To you it is not given to build a splendid church, or establish a memorial window, or sing an immortal song, or found a hospital, or endow a college; you are poor, ignorant, obscure, helpless, and you say, "O! that I could do something for my Lord!" Do you not love him, and is there any gift so precious to him? The angels of Love stand next to the throne!

O, Love! thou art king, albeit men have dis-crowned thee! O, Love! thou art king, although men have driven thee forth into the waste and desert places! O, Love! thou art king, although men have bound thy brows with a crown of thorns, and nailed thee to a cross! Love is king, not power, not genius, not success, not wealth, not strength, not knowledge, but *Love*. O, Love! thou art the great

spiritual prophet, and to thee it is given to behold the invisible realities! Thou buildest for aye; thou shalt never know waste or death! The rock-ribbed mountains shall die; the solid globe itself shall dissolve; the great unsetting suns shall be consumed by their own fierce fires, but Love shall never die, for Love is God, and God is Love. Blessed are they who dwell in Love, and so in God!



## THE GREATNESS OF LOVE

“And now abideth faith, hope, charity [love], these three, but the greatest of these is charity.”—I Cor. 13. 13.

THE apostle Paul generally dictated his epistles to an amanuensis or private secretary, who usually was one of the younger of his fellow workers in the gospel ministry. Do you not wish you had been an amanuensis to Paul? A good many of you do, if you were honest enough to make the confession. There are a great many people who secretly wish they had been consulted in making the Bible, people who would have been glad to have made some suggestions concerning certain subjects, and even still indulge the belief that they could have materially improved it. In the antislavery days before the war, there were a great many abolitionists who had an idea that Paul was a little vague and misty, not quite definite enough on the subject of slavery, and if they had been alive and acting as amanuenses for Paul, they would have insisted that he should unmistakably commit himself to the immediate emancipation of all slaves. There are a great many Sabbatarians alive now who, if they had been with Paul when he wrote his letter to the Romans, and the fourteenth chapter was reached, would at once

have stopped him and said, "Paul, you have not made that clear; that verse about one man regarding the day, and another not regarding it, will be greatly misunderstood; you must make that perfectly plain." There are not a few religious people who, if they had been confidentially advised with by Paul—I mean our Roman Catholic friends—would have had him more distinct and clear than he is on the Roman headship of the Christian church. There are a great many people who believe they could have improved this thirteenth verse of the thirteenth chapter of First Corinthians. I have found one man who, if he had been acting as amanuensis, and Paul had said, "And now abideth faith, hope, love, these three, and the greatest of these is love"—he would have held up his hands and said, "No, Paul, that is a mistake; put *compact organization of the visible church* for the word love, and you will have it right." There are multitudes of people in the churches who believe that the outer form of the organization of the church has more to do with religion conquering the world than love. I have known a man who, if he had been there, would have insisted that the word "beauty" should be substituted for the word love. There are other men who would have substituted the word "music," so that it would read: "And now abideth faith, hope, *music*, these three; but the greatest of these is *music*." There is another class of men who would have said,

“Paul, if you will substitute conscience for the word charity, so that it shall read: And now abideth faith, hope, *conscience*, these three; and the greatest of these is *conscience*.” I suppose there are not fewer than twenty-five people here this morning who would have seconded the suggestion. There are others who would have substituted for this word love the word *zeal*: “And now abideth faith, hope, *zeal*, these three; but the greatest of these is *zeal*.” There are many who, if they had been there, would have substituted for the word love the phrase *sound doctrine*: “Now abideth faith, hope, *sound doctrine*, these three; but the greatest of these is *sound doctrine*.”

My friends, there is a great deal of skepticism in the world, and the greater part of it is in the church. The most subtle, dangerous, and fatal skepticism that is abroad in the world at this hour is within, and not without, the church. Bishop Foster, one of the clearest and most catholic thinkers we have among us, once truly said that it was hard to determine whether religion had not suffered more from the errors of its friends than from the malice of its foes. It is the inside skepticism that kills. When I sit for an hour and a half and listen to a company of Christian people explaining how you are not to love your neighbor as you love yourself, taking up that passage, “Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself,” and clipping it, and minifying it, emptying it of all prac-

tical significance, trying to prove that it is to be taken in a kind of figurative and negative sense, and that it would not do at all really to live by it; when I listen to Christian men trying thus to take the words of the Lord Jesus, and strip them of meaning and vitality, I say to myself, "This is the kind of skepticism that kills." When I listen to men, Christian men, indulging in talk like this: "This doctrine of helping your neighbor, and of entire unselfishness, is a very fine and pretty doctrine to be talked about on Sunday, and after a while, just on the edge of the millennium, people are going to do it, but the truth of it is that on Monday morning it is foolish; the truth of it is that a man must first take care of himself, and woe to the man who forgets to take care of number one, for that is the only way to live if you expect to get along in this world"—when I listen to men who have been in the church twenty years speaking thus scornfully of what Jesus Christ taught as the very heart and substance of his religion, and seeking to show that he never really intended people to live in this way, perverting the Lord's own words from their plain, direct meaning—I am not frightened at Ingersoll, but I am chilled and depressed by the skepticism inside the church.

"Now abideth faith, hope, love, these three, but the greatest of these is love." The word *charity* here does not, of course, mean merely alms giving. In fact, much of our alms giving is simply an effort

to get coarse and wretched and miserable people away from us, so that we will not have to love them. The cheapest way to get rid of a man in real distress is to give him two or three pieces of bread, and a slice of meat, and send him away, and never give yourself another thought about him. But the charity or *love* here described would say first of all, before there is any bread or meat given, "You ought to put your heart close to this man's heart, and find out how it happens that he is in such a forlorn condition." "Well, I am too busy for that; I am too much absorbed in my work for that;" and so we mercifully hand him over to bureaus of charity, and love him through the mediation of official agents! Whatever God has for me in the future, I devoutly pray that he may never permit me to fall into the hands of people whose trade is charity. Rather let me die some night on the street!

Nor does it mean mere intellectual toleration. There are those who tolerate other people and other people's opinions, and imagine they love them, while really they scorn them, and the reason they tolerate them is that they have a kind of good-natured contempt for them. The charity or love spoken of in this text is not the mild amiableness that springs from a fortunate physical organization. A great many people get credit in this world for amiableness, when they no more deserve it than they do for having a good nervous system; they were so born, their

inheritance was such, their animal organization was such, the circulation of their blood is such, their power to digest and assimilate food is such, that, with their health they cannot help being amiable and good-natured. Much of what we call amiability is simply a matter of physical condition and nervous organization, and it is easy to be good-natured with the nerves stowed far away under a mass of adipose tissue, so that nerve irritation and waste is occasional and slight. Love is a matter of principle, not a matter of inheritance or digestion of food. Nor is it to be confounded with an idle, lazy, indolent wishing well to men and women. We all do that, I hope; we all prefer that on the whole men and women may do well. Suppose the great Father had selfishly reposed in his heavenly habitation, until we had extricated and perfected ourselves, saying, "O, yes; I wish them well; I hope they will be able to get through." But that is about the feeling of a great many men toward each other.

1. Now, Love is greatest in the realm of religion, first of all *because of the evils it cures*. It cures more evils than any other force or disposition of which we know anything, alike in the household, in the church, in the community, and in the individual. Love cures more ills in the household than health does, than wealth does, than genius does. A house may appear on the outside as though peace reigned within, when in fact all is bickering, wrangling,

alienation, suffering. I was once preaching about the tender, holy memories of early life, in order to induce men to be true to the faith and tender, holy practice of the father and mother about whom their memories clustered, and after the service a very good and useful man came to me and said: "Do you suppose—I judge you do from your preaching—that everybody has had the kind of home you describe?" I said: "Yes, sir; I hope so." "Well," he said, "you are mistaken; when I was nine years old, one night when my father was drunk and was beating my mother, and I was trying to help her, I was thrown from the window, and I never saw either of them afterward." Alas! all homes are not sweet, gracious, and beautiful; all homes are not homes of love and kindness. Love, and love only, redeems our homes from strife, anger, pride, alienation, clamor, wrath, and bitterness.

It is the same way in the church; there is nothing that will so quickly eradicate evils in a church organization as love; and yet it would seem that there are very few church organizations that act as though they believed it. How do church organizations proceed? I have been connected with several church organizations when the question arose, "How can we increase our power? how can we increase our influence?" I have listened to men as they discussed these matters, and one man will insist that in the first place they must have excellent music; another man



that the church must be eligibly located; another man that the church must be made attractive with flowers; another man dwells upon the prime importance of having a good preacher. After a while some quiet man, that does not do much talking anywhere, and seldom rises to say anything in the official meeting, whispers to the man next to him: "Brother, I will tell you what we need here; we need a little more religion." Well, by religion he means love. That is what the churches need to-day. You make the churches glow with love, empty the churches of the day of their pride, of the hateful spirit of caste, of the spirit of wrangling and envy and rivalry, of the spirit of greed, self-indulgence, worldliness that is in them, and substitute therefor the spirit of genuine brotherhood and love—do that, and we will begin to know wherein consists the strength of a church.

So it is in the life of an individual. Consider how much people suffer from suspiciousness, from envy, from evil speaking, from estrangement, from quarrels, from litigation, from animosities, from fierce rivalries, from the spirit of malice and wrath and hate, and consider how many hearts are being burned out by these dark and malign passions, and then remember that where love reigns they are all expelled. It is love that makes the scourge of small cords and drives out of the human heart every one of these miserable demons.

2. Love, as the inspiration of a life of duty, guarantees depth of insight, and clearness, breadth, and reach of spiritual vision. What, now, is the one condition of growth, success, power, everywhere? A young man goes into a lawyer's office, and seeks permission to study law. What does the wise old lawyer tell him? "Sir, the law is a jealous mistress, and if you wish to succeed, you must give yourself to it with great earnestness and enthusiasm." Who augurs well of a young man who, at twenty-one years of age, is in grave doubts as to whether he will be a farmer, a civil engineer, a lawyer, or an insurance agent? If a man reaches that age with no work that he loves to do, drawn as much to one form of activity as another, it is likely that he will never succeed anywhere. It has been said of Macaulay that he never did anything against the grain. That may account for the excellence of his work, so that the essay on John Milton which he wrote at twenty-four years of age placed him at once in the front rank of English writers. You must *love* what you are going to do in order to succeed at it. This is true in the study of nature. Who finds out the secret of the butterfly? The lover of butterflies. Tyndal loved glaciers and the lofty Alpine heights; he has found out all there is about them. Who discerns the truth in the flowers? The lover of flowers. Who finds out about the animals? Cuvier, the lover of animals. Who constructs the science of orni-

thology? Audubon, the lover of birds. Whatever we love, and wherever we go with a great tide of affection, the secrets yield themselves up to us. If a man loves minerals, he gets the secrets of the minerals; if a man loves the stars, he gets the secrets of the stars, as Kepler and Copernicus did. Now, in the religious life, a man whose whole religious being is under the influence of love, who gives to love the power to reign—that man will find the truth quicker than any other man. There are some important technical questions that the theological professors can answer; there are some outside questions concerning the Bible, for an answer to which I would go to some theological seminary, but for practical wisdom, for the wisdom to live by, to work by, to suffer by, to die by, I would go to some elderly woman who had raised a large family of children in patience, meekness, and love, and I would sit down by her side, and get more true wisdom in a half an hour than I could get from books and schools in a week. Practical truth never can be acquired by books; it is acquired by looking at duty through the eyes of love, and the soul is never so open and permeable by the truth, as when the heart is rich in love. It is well for the world that this is the constitution under which we live, that the shortest way to practical truth is through a loving heart, for there are few men whose time and pursuits are such as to enable them to master the love of

the schools, while all of us may yield to the divine rule of love.

3. The quickest, the truest, the fullest *interpretation of God* comes through love. How do you know a man? Do you know a man when you describe him by saying he is so many feet high, weighs so many pounds, his hair of such a color, his eyes of such hue, he is engaged in such a business, he lives in such a house? Is that a description of the man? Is that the way you interpret and analyze a man? We begin to know a man when we find out the master passion of his nature, and we never know anything about him until we fairly get at that. You may know ever so much about a man externally, you may know ever so much about him intellectually, but until you know what is really back of it all, and quickens it all, and colors it all, and directs it all, until you have followed the subtle windings of his soul, and know in what dispositions and purposes the man has his hidden life, you will never know him. There is a man in a state in this Union who never accepts office, except vicariously. He is like Thurlow Weed in this respect. It is his ambition, however, to be able to say who *shall* accept it, and now for quite a term of years he has been issuing the edicts as to who shall and who shall not take office. The men who go to the United States Senate from that state are called "bosses," and he bosses them. He sets up one, and he pulls down another, and he has

been doing it for years. He would not have *any office*, you could not induce him to take any office, but he makes out a list yearly of those who shall have office. You can never understand that man until you understand that the great motive of his life is to have *power*, not fame, not place, not wealth. He is always poor, always borrowing money, and never will be rich; but he lives in the realm of power. You cannot understand him when you go into his house and look at the fine pictures that he has. You would imagine that he was a great lover of art; but he cares more for power than for all the pictures that were ever painted by Angelo, Titian, and Rubens. He will talk art with you, he will talk anything with you; he knows a little of almost every subject, but beneath it all is this great ambition for the possession of *power*; and you never can enter the house of his soul except by that key. So is it with the man who is engaged in money-making and loves it. It is the supreme passion of his life; and if you want to understand that man, if you want to know why he dresses as he does, if you want to know why he lives in the kind of house he does, if you want to know why he carries himself as he does toward other men, why he gave to one public cause and declined to give to some other, if you want to understand his relations to trades, to politics, to society, or to the church, you must, first of all, understand that making money with him is the supreme object

of human life. So it is with a man whose supreme object in human life is to make a great name, to win publicity while he lives, and fame after his death.

Further, it is necessary, in order truly to understand any man, that we have in us somewhat of that which is most potent in him. Take a man who is absolutely devoid of ambition for power, who is serenely indifferent to its exercise, who cares nothing at all to have it, and he would not understand much about this man whose life is given to ambition. Take a man who has no idea of money at all, and he would not understand or be able to analyze, measure, appreciate, discern, or interpret this man with whom money-making is a supreme object; but if there is just a little desire in his own heart for money, he has that by which he can understand the other man. That is the reason why I hold that a preacher ought to have a large, generous, many-keyed, and sympathetic nature, a little of everything in him, so that he can study the men before him. He ought to love money, but not too much; he ought to love power, but not too much; he ought to be able to read the hearts of the men around him as the pages of an open book.

What, now, is the supreme element in God? What is the regnant quality in the Almighty? What is the sovereign disposition of him whom we have never seen and yet is ever near? I ask you this morning, on the authority of this Book, What

is it in God which forever reigns? And the answer to that question is, LOVE. From the beginning of the Book to the end of the Book, it is nowhere intimated that any other quality in God's nature equals love; no other quality equals it in authority; no other quality equals it in fineness; no other quality equals it in richness; no other quality equals it in volume; no other quality equals it in reach and compass; no other quality in God would give the faintest promise of redemption by a cross, the mysterious power of the Divine Being to suffer, under the blessed compulsion of love. It is the direct and implied teaching of the Word of God that justice in God is to be interpreted in the light of love, not love in the light of justice; that holiness in God is to be interpreted in the light of love; that whatever quality or moral disposition you may ascribe to God, whether it be justice, or holiness, or righteousness, or wisdom, you can only understand it when you interpret it through the light of love. Love gave birth to justice; love gave birth to holiness; love gave birth to righteousness; the love of God is the supreme, sovereign, everlasting, unwasting, inexhaustible, infinite quality of his nature. And so I declare that the love of which the apostle here speaks is the elemental force in religion, because it is only through the experience and by the insight of love that we can understand God at all worthily. Love is greatest, because the man who would know God



must have something in himself whereby he can know that quality which is supreme in God.

Now you will understand why it is that I so often say that a good woman, poor, obscure, devoted to her home, daily laying down her life for her children, the great world thundering by as if no such being was in existence—now you understand why I tell you that the secret of the Lord is with her more than with all the philosophers, more than with all the theologians, more than with all the scientists, more than with all the commentators, more than all mere geniuses, for she carries in her spirit that love which opens the heavens and causes the very face of God to shine forth to lighten her way through life. Nothing is like holy love; nothing is measurable or comparable with it; it infallibly brings God to all open and penitent hearts.

4. Consider love in *its relation to the future life*. According to the teachings of the apostle in this chapter, all other things are relative. Tongues are relative; the method of communication in the spiritual realm will not be by what we call speech. Tongues are the best means for conveying ideas in this present life, but it is not to be supposed that we will be shut up to the use of tongues in heaven. Paul declares that tongues will pass away. So will prophecies; we will have no need of prophecies when we are in a world where we can see far enough to be kept in perfect peace. The power to understand

mysteries is relative and temporary, because there will be no enigmas yonder to mystify and darken our souls. A little boy whose father is a man of large and full knowledge, and has the power to explain a great many things to him, is content as he runs along by his side, as his father explains various objects by the roadside or in the fields, but when the boy is alone he finds many things he cannot understand. So here we may often be in perplexing ignorance, but when we see our Father's face, there will be no mysteries to explain—they will solve themselves. All these things are relative, but love is not relative, for love does not belong to this stage of being only. Wherever there are moral beings, there must be love. It is a disputed question whether there are inhabitants on Jupiter, Neptune, and Saturn; but this we know, that if there are moral beings there, love must be present and vital in their natures. You cannot conceive of moral beings without the disposition, the faculty of love. Love is not tentative, empirical, or instrumental. The great shock of death will put an end to all our prophecies, it will displace the gift of tongues, it will bring waste and loss in many directions, but love will not be touched, it knows no death, and will emerge radiant and resplendent on the other side. Love is closely related to the other life, in the very substance and nature of it. Where that life is we do not know; what it is we do not know; it is veiled

and shrouded in mystery. One thing we know; wherever it is, *love reigns*; no more antagonisms, no more ignorance, no more partialisms, no more envy, no more weakness, no more resentfulness, no more wrath, no more bickering, no more malign passions, no more evil, bitter words. *Love reigns* supreme! No, we do not understand it; we can understand this life from those higher heights, from that clearer air, but we will have no desire to return thither. After many years' absence, a man returns from the city to his old home in the country; one afternoon he goes up stairs into the old-fashioned garret, and he stumbles over his old sled, and he picks it up, and says, "There is the sled I coasted with when I was a boy;" he sees his little coat, and his old cap; he takes them down, tosses off his present hat and tries to put on the old cap, but it will not fit, and as he turns around he sees on the floor the top he used to spin. Imagine him taking off his coat and trying to put the boyish coat on, to wear it permanently! Imagine him giving up his store or office in New York and beginning to spin a top again! Imagine him trying to make his old sled do the work of a large sleigh! When, dear friends, you stand on the other side you will learn, if not before, that all you have been busy with here, your stores, your stocks, your court houses, your lucrative offices, your places of power—you will find that they will appear to you about as the tops and

sleds and caps of a man's boyhood, and you will not want to live in them again or to exchange that life for this.

I sometimes think I would have enjoyed talking with the men who built old Babylon. They thought they were building a city that would last forever, and now the wandering Bedouin can find scarcely a single trace of it. Sometimes I think I would like to have talked with the men who built Memphis, and Thebes, and Luxor. Doubtless they thought they were building imperishable cities, and now the antiquarian is busy digging out their ruins from the sand. I would like to have conversed with Solon, and Moses, and Lycurgus, and other great original legislators. Doubtless they thought they were fixing things for all times, but the laws of Solon, which he gave for the government of Athens, how crude, partial, and inadequate do they seem in the presence of the complex civilization of to-day? I would like to converse with the men who in the old classic times tried to compass all knowledge, and combine it in one splendid system. Aristotle thought he had exhausted the whole realm of knowledge, but what Aristotle knew is only a kind of introductory chapter to what has been found out since. But the living, human hearts in Babylon that purely loved, they still live; the hearts in Luxor, in Thebes, in Memphis, that knew that it was greater to lay one's life down in lowly service for dear love's sake,

than to use it meanly, selfishly, they still live! Your memorable and gorgeous cities, the sand of the desert is over them! Your ancient and honorable laws—they have been displaced by more enlightened and simpler forms of justice. Your venerable philosophies—satisfying to one age, they were scorned and derided by the next! But love—is it dead? Will it ever die out of human hearts? Its cities, its laws, its inspirations, its revealing light, its cleansing power—when will they perish? *Never*, NEVER, NEVER, for it springs eternally in the heart of God! It is that pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, which proceeds out of the throne of God and the Lamb.

## THE POWER OF THE HOLY GHOST

“But ye shall have power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.”—Acts 1. 8.

It would scarcely be possible to conceive of a weaker, a more unpromising, a more forlorn and powerless body of men and women than the first Christian disciples. Tested by the standards of influence and power hitherto prevailing among men, and in the light of what they set out to accomplish, they certainly would seem to us to have been bereft of every element that would augur their success. They might have well been the butt of the world's ridicule. For what were their pretensions? What were their claims? What were their aims? They professed to have been the daily companions, the associates and disciples, for three years, of Divinity veiled in the flesh; they claimed to have lived with this Mysterious Being on terms of the closest intimacy, and they asserted that he had given them solemn commission to convert the whole world to a belief in him as the one Model of human character, as the one Example of human life, and as the one Saviour from guilt and sin. You see at once that these were astounding pretensions, these were wonderful claims, these were sublime ends. They felt

their poverty of power, how unequal they were to this difficult and vast work, and their joy at his resurrection from the dead must have been shaded and tempered by the thought, ever present with them, that he would soon go away from them forever, and that they would be left alone in the world to enter upon this formidable undertaking, to begin the prosecution of this stupendous task.

He led them out as far as to Bethany, comforting and encouraging them by his gracious presence and words, and now there hovers over them the cloud that shall receive him out of their sight. Again they ask him the burning question, "Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?" Again he restrains their eager carnal desires. "It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power. But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth."

Let us consider some of the elements of power in which they were notably and conspicuously deficient. They were without any of the power that comes from antiquity. Behind them was no splendid history. The soldier of England to-day fights not only for the England that is, but he fights for the England that has been, for the England the roots of whose history run back for more than twelve glorious



centuries, and the England of the past is always present, inciting him to be dutiful, heroic, brave, and every way worthy of these high historic associations. When these men and women began their work there was no Christian history behind them, and they were not yet possessed of the spiritual discernment to enable them to discover the intimate relation Judaism sustained to Christianity. They were thus cut off from all the quickening forces inherent in a great history. They were without definite organization; the Roman Catholic Church did not exist; the Reformed Churches did not exist; the Presbyterian Church did not exist; the Baptist Church did not exist; the Methodist Episcopal Church did not exist; the Congregational Churches were not in existence—a band of plain men and women without any ecclesiastical organization. They were without the power that comes from numbers; there were only one hundred and twenty of them, and the majority of them so humble and inconspicuous that their names are not recorded. They could not boast themselves of the power of wealth. In fact, they were so poor that for a time something akin to the spirit of communism prevailed among them. Their earliest converts were among the poorest people everywhere. They had no literature, there was not a Christian book in the world, the New Testament was not written for many years, the greater number of the original disciples were dead

before the gospels assumed their present form, there was not a Christian hymn in the world, there was not a Christian creed in the world, there was not a Christian church in the world. They had none of the helps of architecture, they had none of the aids of art. In all these elements of power their poverty was patent and undeniable.

They were to seek for power, and Jesus promised them power; but it was power of an altogether unusual, peculiar, unique, almost startling character. "Ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you," or, as the margin has it, "the power of the Holy Ghost coming upon you." It was a supernal power, it was a spiritual power, it was not a power that was to be generated by politics, literature, art, numbers, or enthusiasm; it is distinctly and clearly separable, and to be separated from these usual elements of power. It was power that was to come to their spirits as the result of their receiving the Holy Ghost. They were to *receive* it; they were not to develop up to it; they were not to receive such a training as to make it the result of culture; it was not to be the product of a definite intellectual process. They were to receive it; it was not to be the natural outcome of any course of study or thought. Finally, it was to possess them "after that the Holy Ghost had come upon them"; it was a supernatural force coming down into the plane of nature. "Ye shall receive

power" not after your numbers have greatly increased; "ye shall receive power," not after you shall have established yourselves in a great organization, with cardinals, and archbishops, and bishops, and priests, and elders, and deacons; "ye shall receive power," not after you shall have formulated a creed; "ye shall receive power," not after men of genius and wealth and rank shall be admitted into your societies, as they subsequently were; "ye shall receive power," not after a great leader shall be given to you, Saul of Tarsus; "ye shall receive power," not after you shall have built great churches in all the cities of the Roman empire; "ye shall receive power," not after a Christian literature shall be created, and Christian schools everywhere established; "ye shall receive power," not after Christian art shall be the art of the world; but "ye shall receive power, after that the *Holy Ghost* is come upon you." This is the teaching of the text, and we must not miss its meaning.

Mark the sequel. Very shortly after this they passed through an experience which they described as "receiving the Holy Ghost." They were gathered together in a meeting for prayer at which they were all present. They were there with entire unity and confidence. "They were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And

there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance." Now, it is clear that they did at this time undergo a sudden, marvelous, mighty, glorious transformation! I would indicate the nature of the transformation first by the word *courage*. Hitherto they had been timid, apologetic, deferential; they had stood on the defensive; the very moment objections were made they began to apologize for Jesus; or they shrank back confused and ashamed. But they are not on the defensive now; they instantly assumed a bold, fearless, aggressive attitude; every sign of timidity has left them, and Peter, vacillating, unstable, inconstant Peter, faces the great crowd, proud, prejudiced, wicked, and guilty, and charges them with having slain his Master, who, nevertheless, has been exalted to the right hand of God, and from whom they have now received this gift of the Holy Ghost.

I would describe, in the second place, the nature of this change by the word *unselfishness*, as taking on the form of an enthusiastic, positive love. Prior to this time the spirit of selfishness, selfish ambition, especially, had broken out again and again even in the apostolic band. James and John were not ashamed to have recourse to female influence in order to further their supposed interests in the

temporal and political kingdom they believed Jesus about to establish. Their mother had made the request that the chief positions in the kingdom, the one on the right hand and the other on the left hand—the two places nearest the King—should be granted to them; and when Jesus was on the way to Jerusalem for the last time, the whole company disputed by the way as to which should be the greatest. Such was their spirit as recorded by themselves. Now, that has all passed away; a new, strange, glorious spirit enters into them; a spirit that no longer asks for the chief offices; a spirit that drowns greed and false ambition. This spirit possesses the whole company. When they find that there are those in their number who are in need, they make a common fund, and out of that fund the wants of all are supplied. Such was the radical and marvelous change in this direction. What would be the effect if a preacher should now preach that a model Christianity would ultimately reach the condition described in the second chapter of Acts “where all that believed were together, and had all things common”? Would he not be suspected as a communist? In this century an English preacher was suspected of Chartism because he undertook to preach the gospel along this line, and to teach that human brotherhood might some day be real, all-potent, and universal.

Somewhat of the nature of this change is indi-

cated, again, by the word *unworldliness*. They are in the world, but they are not of it; their conversation is in heaven. The word "unworldliness" has come to be regarded as something associated with asceticism, narrow, dark, bitter, malign; but we must rescue it from evil associations, and give it such large and noble significance as the spirit of the New Testament demands. The early Christians were unworldly, and yet they mastered the world, living beyond its weakening and contaminating touch. With them it meant that they should be in the world, but not of it in spirit; in the world, but triumphant over its pains, persecutions, temptations, allurements, and all its witchery of evil.

The word faith, or the faculty of spiritual insight, discloses to us somewhat of the nature or effect of this supernal power received by the early disciples. By faith I mean to say that they had a direct sense of invisible things, not a belief about them, not a mere clinging to a tradition that the Eternal had spoken to their fathers, not an intellectual notion that there was something real behind phenomena, but that it was given them to see the reality and potency of the invisible world, and that they lived in the open vision of supersensuous truths. Faith is not a notion, faith is not a mere assent of the understanding, faith is the present sensing of the supernatural, and such was their faith. It rendered them superior to circumstances. By it they triumphed

over pain, poverty, persecution, suffering, and death. Like Moses, they endured as seeing him who is invisible.

The opening up of this passage of Scripture discloses to us the interior nature and the only source of true church power. What a difference, what a sharp contrast between the New Testament church and the churches of this time! Wherein the New Testament church was rich, we are poor; and wherein we are rich the New Testament church was poor. How rich are our churches in external elements as contrasted with the New Testament church! How poor are we in spiritual elements, in the power of the Holy Ghost, when we measure ourselves with the New Testament church! We have, or ought to have, whatever power comes from numbers. I will not undertake to give the exact statistics of the number of people in the world who are members of the Christian church; I am not much given to that method of estimating moral and spiritual forces, but it is a vast number, and whatever power belongs to mere numbers should be the property of the modern church. Whatever power there is in a great history, Christianity ought to have, for there are eighteen centuries of glorious history behind us. There are dark pages in that history, some very dark, some very cruel, some very bloody, but to the man who can look at it with a large and sympathetic eye, the eighteen centuries of Christian history back of us



are full of growth, of light, of inspiration, of encouragement, and of incitement to the highest saintliness. The money power of the Christianity of this time is greater than at any previous period—never could Christian devotion lay so much gold before the Holy Child. How rich are we in a Christian literature! All our literature is more or less pervaded with the spirit of Christianity. We have Christian hymns in abundance now—glorious hymns, full of the very spirit of God. Open this or any other church hymnal, and you will find that for more than fifteen hundred years devout and gifted minds, open to God, have been giving us great hymns; and when we pass from the words to the music, what do we find but that the noblest and grandest music in the world has been written in the spirit and dedicated to the worship of Christ. The best music of the world is the outgrowth and possession of Christianity. We are rich in all these external elements, rich in numbers, rich in men of rank, genius, and wealth, rich in the great names of the modern world, rich in history, rich in organization, rich in music, rich in schools and in architecture and in art, while the most splendid buildings on the globe are those which have been erected and dedicated to the worship of Christ. And yet, with all this external wealth, we are poor, timid, feeble, and apologetic before the forces of worldliness, materialism, and unbelief.

Consider how rich the New Testament church was where we are poor. It was rich in courage, and herein we are poor. How few of you make anything like a courageous acknowledgment of your loyalty to Christ! How many of you within a year have said to those nearest to you, to the men over whom you would be likely to have the most influence: "I am a disciple of Jesus Christ, and have been so for many years; I am keeping his words, falteringly and imperfectly, perhaps, but it is my constant endeavor to obey him, and you also should walk in this way"? How many men are there in this congregation who have made such a confession? Do you know what you do? When a man, tintured with the disbelieving spirit of these times, says to you, "I understand you are a member of that church"? what do you say? "Why, yes; I was brought up that way, you know. My father and mother belonged to the church, and when I was quite young I joined it; and I suppose I remain in it from mere force of habit." Shame on you! Shame on you! to let a man put you to such a miserable, cowardly defense as that! Where is the sign of the courage that is the result of the reception of divine power in such an abject apology as that for being in the church? Why should you lower your head when you are asked if you are a member of the church? Why begin to use apologetic expressions? Are we not deficient in unselfish love? How

much love is there in the churches that is uncalculating, unconventional, positive, spontaneous, enthusiastic? Take this congregation, include the preacher, as a lay member who has been set aside for the purpose of teaching, and would there not have to be a tremendous spiritual change before we would consent to have a common purse? Are we not a long way off from such an unselfish love as that? Yet such was the power of the Holy Ghost in the hearts of the early Christians, that they sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need. Unworldliness—have we not wandered away from the spirit of unworldliness as they had it in the New Testament church? We are not only in the world, but are we not *of* the world? Have we not yielded more or less to the spirit of the world? Are not there many in the churches suffering from partial spiritual paralysis, weakened by drinking in the spirit of the world, who know nothing of the glorious freedom of unworldliness, who know nothing of the spirit of men who knew that a few years—forty, fifty, sixty—are not to be pitted against a vast and incalculable life? And, finally, where the New Testament church was rich in faith are we not poor? How many of us sense the supernatural? How many of us have a religion that is more than a tradition? How many of us have broken through the entanglements of the flesh? How many of us have

broken through this thin cobweb work of worlds, and suns, and stars, to the eternal realities beyond them? How many of us know that mountains are disintegrating and globes are decaying, but that God, and Duty, and Love, and Truth are eternal?

I look out over the church to-day and I hear a confession of its weakness and powerlessness. I see many good men turning about and seeking a remedy for this weakness and powerlessness in the church, and, among other answers, I hear these: There is the answer of the Roman Church first of all, "O, warring sects, O, poor, restless heretics, with your hands raised against each other, come back to the old mother church; you cannot get along unless you have somebody to determine everything; you want peace and rest, we will give it to you; come back and believe what we tell you; we have an infallible head and a splendid history; come back to us and you will have power." Then I hear the Christian ritualist, and he belongs to every denomination, saying, "Well, the race has been developed to such a point that you cannot have a direct spiritual religion any more, you must have an elaborate and showy ceremonial, you must make your appeal to the sentiment of awe and mystery in people's minds; do that, and you will fill the churches." I hear the Christian intellectualist, and he belongs to all the denominations, saying, "No, that is not the way to possess the desired power; what we need is a defi-

nite, sharply defined creed, and a generation of preachers that will honestly accept it, and boldly preach it." I hear the Christian liberalist, and he belongs to all the denominations, and he declares that too many creeds have brought us where we are. "Throw them all away, take the New Testament as it is, and let men do the best they can in the light of the New Testament." And there is another genus; I have been unable to group them under a single appropriate name—they propose to turn the churches into places for holding sacred concerts on Sunday morning and evening, fill the church by advertising a popular musical service, permit the preacher to talk to the people ten or fifteen minutes on some moral topic, and so you will give power to the church. This plan has been tried in several cities, and under very favorable circumstances. Large choirs have been hired, thousands of dollars expended in a single year for music, splendid soloists employed, and they have crowded the church full at all the services. Finally, the money gave out, the fine music was given up, and it was supposed the people would stay by force of association, but the crowd at once melted away, and the last state of that church was worse than the first. Either Christianity is no religion at all, or the sources of its power lie farther back than any or all these things; either Christianity is no religion at all, or the source of power in Christianity is the human soul baptized

by the divine soul. That is the central truth, the vital truth of the Christian religion! And now you are explaining it all away again, and saying to yourselves, "I wish I had lived in the first Christian ages; I wish I had been alive in those times when the Holy Ghost came directly and consciously to the hearts of men and women." If Christianity is simply historical in its religious life, if Christianity in its revelation of the Divine Spirit coming to the human spirit restricts the promise to a remote time—eighteen hundred years ago, in a distant land and among a strange people—if the Holy Ghost is not as near to your heart as it was to Peter's heart, if God is not as near to us to-day as he was to these men and women on the day of Pentecost, if God be not a living God to-day to us, if the power of the Holy Ghost be not open to our faith and spirits, if we have no direct internal evidence that God speaks to men, if we are shut up to historical testimony that he did a long time ago speak to men's hearts, but that he does not do so now, if this be our case, it is to be feared that the critical objector has the best of the argument. A religion that depends upon historical evidence alone for its strength and convincing power, must become weakened in proportion to the lapse of time—the farther off from the original occurrences, the weaker the evidence. Not so with a spiritual religion—a religion that now believes in God and the human soul; a religion that

teaches that the human spirit may be entered, and possessed, and empowered by the Divine Spirit, a religion with the blessed faith of the early disciples, the religion preached by John Wesley a hundred years ago, which (though they closed the doors of their proud cathedrals against him, though he was not permitted to preach in the influential pulpits of the English Establishment, though he was derided and treated as a fanatic, though he was stoned and beaten in the streets of Christian England) proclaimed the certain assurance of forgiveness, the certain rest of the soul in God, the direct, unmistakable witness of the Spirit, the present capacity of our spirits to receive the Holy Ghost, and be empowered by him to testify, to suffer, to work, to do all the will of God—this is the religion of Scripture and reason, and the only religion that is impervious to the attacks of modern unbelief. The power of Christianity does not lie in our churches, nor in our organizations, nor in our wealth, nor in our creeds, nor in our literature, nor in our hymns, but in the power of the Holy Ghost in human hearts—cleansing, sanctifying, ennobling, uplifting, making distinct, regnant, and luminous the whole spiritual nature of man by the coming into it of God.

Will you receive this divine life? Will you? Is this strange doctrine? It is the very truth of Christianity. "Ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you!" Have you this power?



Will you become witnesses unto him this day? Will you witness for him every day to the end of your lives? Have you received the Holy Ghost? Have you even so much as heard that there is a Holy Ghost? Have you? Have you? Is religion a tradition or a life with you? May the Holy Ghost himself incline you to receive him, and may each of you, and may this church, henceforth be strong in the power of an indwelling God!

## THE CONDITION OF THE BEATIFIC VISION

“Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.”—Matt. 5. 8.

THE nature of the purity here pronounced blessed will begin to appear when you strongly emphasize the word heart. “Blessed are the pure *in heart*, for they shall see God.” The purity to which Jesus here promises the beatific vision is in sharp contrast with the Pharisaic notion of purity, and Jesus intended so to put it. The legal, Judaistic idea of purity at the time of the earthly life of Jesus was hard, narrow, external, mechanical. A Jew defiled himself, for example, by having any intercourse with the Samaritans, whether that intercourse was of a political, or commercial, or social, or religious character. The pious Jews had positively no dealings with the Samaritans. The Samaritan woman was surprised when Jesus spoke to her by the well, and when the disciples returned from the city, and found him engaged in free conversation with her, they were greatly disturbed at the sight. To have anything whatever to do with these heretical Samaritans was, according to the teachings of the Jewish rabbis, to contract moral defilement. One defiles himself by eating food with unwashed hands, and the scribes and Pharisees upbraided the Lord be-

cause he would quietly permit his disciples to break such an important law as that of washing the hands before eating. They were extremely punctilious in their observance of the Sabbath day. One might walk two thousand paces from the wall of the city, but not a single pace farther, without contracting defilement and needing purification. One might not do any sort of work on the Sabbath day, and when, walking through the barley fields, the disciples rubbed the heads of grain in their hands, they were at once accused of breaking the Sabbath day.

A scrupulous Jew, living, or traveling in a foreign country, upon his return to the Holy Land was careful at the boundary line to halt and remove his sandals, and brush from them on heathen soil all the pagan dust, so that with clean sandals he might set foot on the consecrated soil.

One great question that disturbed their greatest teachers for many years, was whether an egg laid on Sunday could be eaten without moral defilement. It was unanimously agreed that if the egg had been laid by a hen kept for that purpose, it would be unlawful to eat it, but if the egg had been laid by a hen, kept for eating, then what? This was a matter of dispute for a long time until finally a voice from heaven decided in favor of the stricter school, that such an egg could not be eaten.

When the time drew near for the great feast of the passover, it was very easy for a careless Jew to

defile himself. You remember that on the morning of the day upon which our Lord was crucified, very early in the morning, the Jews who had been trying or profess—to try Jesus before Caiaphas, hurried him to the hall of Pontius Pilate, but when they reached the place they would by no means enter themselves, lest they should be defiled, rendered unfit to keep the feast, and so they thrust him in. They would not put their sanctified feet on the heathen pavement, they were too holy to touch it, but not too holy to crucify the innocent and the just. These are only a few illustrations of the false, artificial ideas of purity which were in the minds of the people to whom Jesus preached the Sermon on the Mount, and when he said, “Blessed are the pure *in heart*,” light began to dawn on their darkened minds. When he said to these peasants and fishermen, “inside purity, real, genuine purity, gives the light,” then they began to understand. It is not a question of two thousand paces on Sunday, or two thousand and nine. It is not a question of pagan dust or of Palestinian dust; it is not a question of rubbing out heads of barley; it is not a question of intercourse with heretics; it is not a question of washing hands and dishes; it is a question of the heart, it is a question of actual purity, it is a question of pure thought, it is a question of pure motives, it is a question of pure desire, a question of pure affection, it is a question of the moral cleanness of

the inside of a man, and at once the scales began to fall from their eyes. "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God."

Mark now the wisdom of Christ's teachings. He does not work from the outside to the inside man, but precisely the contrary. He strikes at once at the root of the whole matter. He does not begin to doctor the symptoms, he prescribes for the disease itself, it is not his way to cure one bad habit here, another there, and another yonder, but to reach far back and cleanse and purify the sources of moral and spiritual life. It has been said that Christianity is a reforming force, that it is a polishing force, a refining and civilizing force. It is a reforming force, it is a polishing force, it is a refining and civilizing force, but it is vastly more than that; its supreme aim is something higher than to make men decent on the outside. It proposes something more complete, something higher and better than the fashioning of men into whitened sepulchers, without fair and seemly, within foul and unsightly. Christianity aims at the actual regeneration, the recreation, the revivification of men by a Power outside of themselves. They have not very deeply penetrated the real essence of Christianity, who imagine that it means merely to reform men on the outside, to whitewash them with the ordinary social and industrial moralities. Christianity solemnly commands men to be pure in thought, to be pure in feeling, to

be pure in desire, to be pure in imagination, to be pure in affection, to be pure in motive, as well as to be pure in word, and deed, and life.

Let us study the beatitude of the pure-hearted. They are pronounced blessed, because they see God. The truth of the passage may be stated in this form: They who see God are blessed; the pure, and the pure only, shall see God; therefore, blessed are the pure, *because they see God*. What is meant by seeing God? Not a material vision, evidently. God is not matter or any part matter. God is not prisoned, or limited, or confined by matter. As one of the ancient creeds expresses it, "He is without body, parts, or passions." It is not for us to localize or materialize the great God. God is only worthily thought of when he is conceived as a spirit, and therefore to these eyes, to these present material eyes, no vision of God shall here be granted. "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him." How may we reconcile these two statements: "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God," and the declaration of John, "No man hath seen God at any time? What is meant by seeing God? Did Moses see God? Did Moses have a material sight of the Divine Being? Is it not declared that he was hid in the cleft of the rock and that God passed by and in some mysterious manner declared his name, and by declaring his name dis-

closed his interior nature and governing purpose? "The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty." So it was that Moses saw God. Seeing God in this life is the soul's present absolute certainty of God—such a certainty as resolves doubt and scatters darkness. I repeat it with reverence, I repeat it as the deepest truth to be known by the men of this time, or of any time, seeing God is the soul's present certainty of God by moral intuition, by spiritual insight. How can we see the invisible? Here are men of justice, men who see and are ruled by justice every day of their lives, and yet justice is an invisible quality! Here are men of integrity, they see integrity in other men every day of their lives, and yet integrity is something invisible. Do you not see love in the household every day, and yet, is not love invisible? If man's nature be so constituted as that he can see (not by his eyes, but by his spirit) invisible moral qualities, may he not also be so endowed as that, by the moral clarity of his spirit, he may see the Being in whom those moral qualities live? He may indeed see him, not by the sight of the eye, but by the reverence, loyalty, purity of his spirit.

Thus interpreted, there is wrapped up in this passage the profoundest practical importance. It is not



said here that scholarly men shall see God. Let us read this beatitude in several ways. It does not read, "Blessed is the scholarly man, for he shall see God;" it does not read, "Blessed is the ignorant man, for he shall see God;" it does not read, "Blessed is the man with poetic genius, for he shall see God;" it does not read, "Blessed is the man that is ungifted, for he shall see God;" it does not read, "Blessed is the rich man, for he shall see God;" neither does it read, "Blessed is the poor man, for he shall see God;" it does not read, "Blessed is the man who is capable of conducting abstract processes of reasoning," nor does it read, "Blessed is the man who cannot logically put propositions together;" but it does say, "Blessed is the *pure*-hearted man, for he shall see God!" This is the open, simple, deep truth of this passage of the Bible. Shall the scholarly man then not see God? Yes! but not by virtue of his scholarship, but by virtue of his purity. Shall the ignorant man not see God? Yes! but not because he is ignorant, but because he is pure. Shall the rich man see God? Yes! many rich men do see him, but their riches do not disclose him; they find him by virtue of their purity. Shall the poor man see God? Yes! but not because he is poor (Christianity never elevates poverty to the dignity of a virtue, there is nothing virtuous in poverty); the poor man shall see God because he is a pure man, and not because he is a poor man.

Here do we find the answers to a great many of our questions. What has been the great question of the ages? It has not been one of business, it has not been one of education, it has not been one of art, it has not been one of government, it has not been one of civilization; the great question has been, "How shall we find God? how shall we know God?" The prayer of Moses, that earnest, patient, mighty man of God, has been the prayer of all deep, reverent, thoughtful souls in every land and under all forms of religion. "O Lord," he said, "O Lord, I beseech thee," and when a great man like Moses uses the word "beseech" it fills the heavens with its vast significance. "O Lord, I beseech thee, show me thy glory." That has been the passionate outcry of men in every age and in every land; not for fame, not for long life, not for wealth, not for power, not for freedom from pain, but the mighty hunger of the heart has been that the heavens would be riven, that the face of the Holy One should be disclosed, and that the celestial light might shine down. "O Lord, I beseech thee, show me thy glory," is the passionate prayer of all centuries and of all earnest, loving, adoring hearts. We yearn, we cry out in the night of life for the beatific vision. The condition of the answer, the one universal condition, is in the text, Blessed is the pure man, for to him shall come that manifestation, that discernment of the Father's face and love, not through a riven

heaven, but in holy places, the innermost sanctuary of a pure heart. Not the acute, not the imaginative, not the educated, not the stolid, not the poor, not the ignorant, as such, but the pure, *the pure*, they shall see God!

What would be the result if the knowledge of God were restricted to the logical faculties of the mind, the powers of the understanding? It would be the establishment of an intellectual aristocracy. Aristocracy is always baneful, whether it be of blood, of dollars, or of culture, and it has no place in religion; but if the knowledge of God is to be confined to those who are capable of beginning, continuing, and completing intricate complex processes of reasoning, what have we but the establishment of an intellectual aristocracy to whom, and to whom alone, God reveals himself. There are many magnificent arguments of this nature, but the vast majority of men have not the time to read them, nor have they the previous mental training to enable them to exactly measure the precise value of the various arguments. Able and patient thinkers are constantly working the great arguments into new forms, and we now have the ontological argument, the cosmological argument, the teleological argument, the juridical argument, and the majority of clergymen (and here I go with the majority) would have occasion for their dictionaries precisely and intelligently to define the words. Now, if there be

no revelation of God except to those who are competent for these profound studies, the majority of men are left without God. If the knowledge of God is contingent upon intellectual conditions, the result is an aristocracy. There must be some simpler, shorter, directer, more universal way. There is such a way—it is by the pure heart.

During my second year in the ministry I boarded with a coal miner. He was not a man of books or an abstract thinker; he rose very early in the morning, and went off to the mine, and did not come out until four o'clock in the afternoon, and then he dragged himself to the house more dead than alive. If that man's only means of ascertaining whether he had a Father depended upon his time and ability to enter upon the study of the great theistic argument, he was practically without God and without hope in the world. Nevertheless, he knew God as few men have ever known him.

He so impressed me with his life of love and faith in God that often in the evening I would go down to the family room and ask him to pray; and though his hands were grimy with the traces of his hard, servile labor, he did know the way of access to God, and often he brought to my heart such a vision of the divine as brought me direction and strength for many days. The pure-minded man shall find God whether he be vested in formal rules of logic and reasoning or not. Nor is it true, as a matter of

fact, that acuteness of intellect discovers the higher moral truths. The disclosure of God is not contingent upon the intellectual faculties acting alone.

Somebody says, "What about George Eliot?" I have read somewhat about her. "What about John Stuart Mill?" I am not ignorant of his history, or unappreciative of his genius. "How do you explain the fact that they were uncertain about God?" It is not for me, speaking in this or in any other place, to asperse the dead, or malign the living, but there is no transgression of the law of Christian charity in the calm, deliberate statement that if all women, in their relation to men, were governed by the example of George Eliot, and if all men, in their relations to women, were governed by the example of John Stuart Mill, the monogamic household, the Christian family, would not survive a single generation. "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God." Was there ever a finer, more variously gifted, or more richly imaginative mind than that of Shelley? Poor unfortunate! And yet he blasphemed Christ. How are we to account for it? Not his marvelous intellect, but the licentiousness of his life explains it. I once knew a man who disturbed me no little in the matter of religious belief. He had read more than any man I had ever known up to that time; he had at least ten books in his library to every one I had in mine, and they were among the best books in the world. He was an

omnivorous reader; and he had enough intellectual power to digest and assimilate all that he read. When I wanted to know anything about new books I always went to him, and generally deferred to his judgment. His memory was like Macaulay's, accurate, quick, full, practically inexhaustible. This man did not believe in anything. That used to trouble me quite a good deal. "There is that man," I would say, "the most intellectual man in this neighborhood, and he does not believe in anything; he does not even believe in God." He told me that, after the death of his sister, he went into the room where she lay, shut himself in, and, holding her hand in his for hours, he tried to make himself believe that there might be life after death, but it was all in vain. I was greatly perplexed, and I began to wonder if it was true that, in proportion as men grew intellectually, they grew away from the truths of religion. Time passed on, and in less than three years it became known that that man had been false to official trusts; that he had embezzled large sums of money, and that for several years he had been living a loose, vile life. He missed God because he was a false man, and not because he was a great reader or an accurate thinker.

At the same time, or about that same time, I was called one day to a tenement house in a squalid and neglected portion of the city, and I found there a woman, shabbily and meanly dressed, with one child

lying dead, another child sick and almost dying with diphtheria, and her husband lying in a drunken sleep in a corner of the room. She told me they had buried one child without the presence of a minister, and she had ventured to ask me to come and say a word of prayer before they buried the second. I saw it all at a glance, and I said, "Do you believe in God?" The quick tears came, and she said, "Yes." "Do you believe that God governs this world and loves men and women, when you see all this?" "Yes, I know he does." "Are you sure you believe in God?" "Yes; he supports and upholds me." "Why don't you get a divorce from your husband?" "My brothers have urged me to do so, and have promised to provide for me; but I don't believe in these modern notions of easy divorce, and I mean if I can, to love him up to goodness." She had God, not because she was able to think deeply, but because her heart was pure. "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God."

It was never promised that anybody else ever should see him. Where is the passage in this Book that says that genius, as such, shall see him? Where is the promise that a man shall find him by reason of large intellectuality, or as the result of abstract thinking? Everywhere in this Book it is declared that they whose hearts are pure shall find him. "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him."



There is a period of life when we are all certain of God. There is one time in life when nobody doubts God. It is a period of comparative innocence, openness, moral permeableness—it is the period of childhood. As yet the soul has not been overloughed by selfish and malign passions. Goodness, love, and truth are real to the child. Where is the child atheist? Is he in your home, is he in the home of your friend? A child atheist! Why, such a child would be a hideous, revolting monstrosity. And why are children so certain of God? “Because they are weak and puerile?” does some man say. Wordsworth teaches us that childhood finds God and the open spiritual life because it is pure, and not because it is weak. Have you ever read his great ode on the “Intimations of Immortality from the Recollections of Early Childhood”? Listen to a single quotation:

“Not in entire forgetfulness,  
 And not in utter nakedness,  
 But trailing clouds of glory do we come  
     From God, who is our home;  
 Heaven lies about us in our infancy!  
 Shades of the prison house begin to close  
     Upon the growing boy,  
 But he beholds the light and whence it flows,  
     He sees it in his joy;  
 The youth who daily farther from the east  
     Must travel, still is Nature’s priest,  
     And by the vision splendid  
     Is on his way attended;  
 At length the man perceives it die away,  
 And fade into the light of common day.”

Am I speaking to men of whom these words are true? Am I speaking to men who have lost the God who was certain to their consciousness when they were children? And are you now laying the flattering unction to your soul that the reason why you have lost him is that you have grown so strong and deep and wise? O brother, I declare on the authority of Him who has never been convicted of inaccuracy and who has never been charged with falsehood, I declare on the authority of him who spake as never man spake, and lived as man never lived, that if you have missed God, it is because you have not been a better man, and not because you are such a great thinker. "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God."

The lesson is short and weighty, Be pure! Make money? Yes, but first be pure. Build houses? Yes, but first be pure. Write books? Yes, but first be pure. Educate your children? Yes, but first be pure. This is the condition of the beatific vision. There is no other way to find God, and if you miss him you have missed everything. Blessed is the man who sees God. Blessed is the man who in every storm finds an ample cover, who finds shelter beneath the wings of Jehovah until all calamities are past. Blessed is the ship that knows a harbor of safety in every storm! More blessed is the soul that in every tempest when the angry waves threaten to engulf it beyond the reach of human help or love or

hope, knows how to enter into the security, the calm, the strength of the Eternal! Blessed is the man who, as he sinks with weakness, is suddenly upborne by invincible strength. Blessed is the man who, whether riches come or go, can say, "I have God, and am rich beyond compare." Blessed is the mother, who in the household, with patience almost divine, reveals the lesson of the cross before our eyes day by day, the woman who by fidelity and piety always sees God. Blessed are you, ye aged ones, to whom is given the present sight of God, for soon you shall see him as you have never seen him here, in the full radiance of his unshaded splendor. Blessed are we all, young men, and old, mothers, maidens, and children, for the beatific vision is not far from our eyes, and heaven still lies all about us. *Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.*"

## BISHOP SIMPSON

“Know ye not that there is a prince and a great man fallen this day in Israel?”—2 Sam. 3. 38.

DEATH is a solemn and mysterious event, come when it will, to whom it may. An instinctive and undefinable sense of awe pervades the reflecting mind when any human spirit passes into the belt of darkness, long, low, and distant, where “the life to come touches the life that is.” It may be a sweet little child; it may be a soul laden with guilt, wretched with despair; it may be a gifted or crowned one; it may be one of earth’s lowly, obscure toilers and sufferers; the stroke may fall suddenly, or it may be long delayed; but let the inevitable hour come when it will, it brings with it an unearthly solemnity. Men reverently bow their heads; they hear the voice, they confess the presence, of the great God. They are hushed into silence by the nearness of the powers of the invisible world. This sense of the presence of God in death is heightened and intensified when a man dies who by the vigor of his intellectual powers, the exalted purity of his personal character, and the greatness of his public services, has faithfully and illustriously served the cause of truth, freedom, and religion in

his generation. At such times we stand so near the "thin veil that separates mortals and immortals, time from eternity, that the whispers of God may be heard by the children of men." When on last Wednesday morning, through the "parting folds" of that "thin veil," Matthew Simpson was admitted to the company of the immortals, a great church felt the hallowing touch of the hand of God. For more than a quarter of a century Matthew Simpson has been the most conspicuous figure in American Methodism. To many his death will bring a sense of loss intense and personal. Many households will be shadowed as though one had gone who had become a part of the family history. Life pursues its accustomed rounds; the sights and sounds of nature are as of yesterday:

"The rainbow comes and goes,  
And lovely is the rose;  
The moon doth with delight  
Look round her when the heavens are bare;  
Waters on a starry night  
Are beautiful and fair;  
The sunshine is a glorious birth;  
But yet I know, where'er I go,  
That there hath passed away a glory from the earth."

The science of heredity, if not the register of heralds, proclaims that Bishop Simpson was well born. On his father's side he traced his ancestry back to Scotch-Irish families—about the best blood in the world. In the veins of his mother, French

and English blood intermingled. The Bishop was born in Cadiz, Ohio, June 20, 1811. The death of his father within a year of his birth devolved the entire responsibility of the training and education of the child upon the young widow, and she, as many godly women similarly situated, nobly acquitted herself of her task. He received an excellent academic education in his native town, and subsequently attended Madison College, located at Uniontown, Pennsylvania, where, among others, he had for schoolmates the Rev. William Hunter, D.D., now deceased, and the Hon. Waitman T. Willey, of West Virginia, who still lives to honor manhood and reflect glory upon the Christian profession. Young Simpson was a diligent student, becoming quite a proficient in Latin, Greek, Hebrew, and the modern languages, and thoroughly disciplining his logical powers by the study of mathematics. Nor were books his only teachers; he was being educated at the same time by the magnificent mountain scenery of the college vicinage. At nineteen years of age, such was his advancement in knowledge and such his self-control, that he was elected to the office of tutor in his own college. Graduating in 1832, he studied medicine, was admitted to his degree, and at once entered upon the practice of his profession. He soon, however, became convinced that it was his duty to preach the gospel, and in the summer of 1833 was received on trial in the Pittsburg Annual

Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church. In the second year of his ministry, while pastor of the Liberty Street Church, Pittsburg, he began to attract public attention by his phenomenal pulpit eloquence. He was at this time about twenty-four years of age. In 1837 he became vice-president of Allegheny College, Meadville, Pennsylvania, and in 1839 he was called to the presidency of Indiana Asbury University, at Greencastle, Indiana, where he remained until, in 1848, he was elected editor of the Western Christian Advocate, at Cincinnati. In 1852 the General Conference meeting in Boston, he was elected to the office of bishop.

American Methodism has never hitherto considered youth a crime. Matthew Simpson at twenty-four was the pastor of a strong city station, at twenty-six he was vice-president of Allegheny College, at twenty-eight he was president of Indiana Asbury University, at thirty-seven he was editor of the Western Advocate, and he was bishop before he had attained the age of forty-one. Thomas Coke and Francis Asbury, the first and second bishops of the Methodist Episcopal Church, were respectively thirty-seven and thirty-nine years old at the time of their consecration. Bishop Roberts was elected to the episcopal office at thirty-eight, as was also Bishop J. O. Andrew. Joshua Soule was presiding elder of the Maine District, including the entire state of Maine, at twenty-three years of age, and



was elected to the office of bishop the first time at thirty-nine. Jesse Lee was a young man, only thirty-two years of age, when he stood under the famous big tree on Boston Common, the first evangelist of Methodism in New England. Wilbur Fisk, the first president of Wesleyan University, was elected to that highly important and responsible post at the age of thirty-eight. The seraphic John Summerfield was but twenty-four years of age when the fame of his marvelous eloquence was such that the churches of New York were too small to contain the audiences that desired to hear him preach. The acute and able Edmund S. Janes was elected to the office of bishop at the age of thirty-seven.

From 1852 to 1861 the time and energy of Bishop Simpson were wholly devoted to the discharge of the duties of a Methodist bishop. During this period he made his first public appearance abroad, visiting and speaking at the Irish and British Conferences, and also at the meeting of the Evangelical Alliance in the city of Berlin. In 1858 he returned to the United States, having passed through Europe, Asia, Egypt, and the Holy Land. Bishop Simpson earnestly believed in the necessity of higher education for the preachers of the gospel, and he labored assiduously and successfully to secure the adoption of this enlightened policy on the part of the church. It was to further this end that he accepted the presidency of the Garrett Biblical In-

stitute at Evanston, Illinois, removing thither from Pittsburg in 1859.

In 1861 the civil war broke out, and the great question whether "a nation conceived in liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal," "whether any nation so conceived and so dedicated could long endure," was put to the solemn arbitrament of the sword. From the very beginning of the mighty and memorable struggle Bishop Simpson was a strong pillar of hope to the nation. It was in this broad field that he won national reputation as an orator of the first rank. He was a close and trusted friend of President Lincoln, and when the sky was lowering his advice was more than once sought by the troubled and anxious President. During the dark days of the war, when defeat and disaster to the national cause seemed imminent, when men's hearts were failing them for fear, Bishop Simpson, at the request of Mr. Lincoln, delivered in the large cities of the North that series of powerful addresses on the Union which electrified the nation, roused the people to new hopes and fresh toils, increased their patriotic devotion, intensified and enlarged the spirit of self-sacrifice. It is related that at a time when President Lincoln was unusually depressed and disheartened in view of the many troubles in which the country was involved, and when he had expressed a fear that he might not live to see the end, Bishop Simpson uttered the words,

“Man is immortal till his work is done.” The careworn face of the President lighted up at once, clearly betokening the fresh cheer and courage which he had derived from the impressive words of the godly bishop. It was altogether fitting and appropriate that Bishop Simpson should have been chosen to deliver the funeral address at Springfield, when the body of the murdered President was laid in the grave. At the close of the war the bishop was urged by Secretary Stanton to preside over the organization of the Freedmen’s Bureau, and was also invited by President Grant to go as commissioner to San Domingo, both of which offers he respectfully declined. In a time of distress and emergency, in a time of great national peril, he did not forget that he was a citizen of the republic, but when peace returned he did not forget that he was a Christian bishop.

In the year 1773, when the first Annual Conference of Methodist preachers met in the city of Philadelphia, thirty-eight years before his birth, the statistics of American Methodism occupied small space. They were as follows: Preachers, 10; members of the societies, 1,160. At the time of his birth the Methodist Episcopal Church had been formally organized but twenty-seven years, and Bishop Asbury was still exercising his apostolic ministry. In 1811, the year of his birth, the communicants of the church numbered 184,567. At that time there was

not a single academy or collegiate institution in the country owned or controlled by the people called "Methodists." The Missionary Society was not organized until the year 1819, nor did it send out its first foreign missionary until after he had attained his majority. The expansion and growth of American Methodism during his lifetime is probably not surpassed, if indeed it is equaled, in the entire history of organized Christianity. The number of traveling preachers had grown from between 500 and 600, in 1811, to over 25,000, in 1883. The number of local preachers rose to over 34,000; of lay members from 184,567 to nearly 4,000,000, or stated exactly, to 3,993,820. Five years after he was chosen bishop, that is, in 1857, the number of our church buildings was 8,335, valued at more than \$15,000,000; the number of parsonages was 2,174, valued at something over \$2,000,000. In 1882 the number of church buildings was 18,152, valued at more than \$65,000,000; the number of parsonages was 6,224, valued at more than \$9,000,000. In twenty-five years the increase in the number of church buildings was 7,817, and the increase in value was over \$49,000,000; the increase in the number of parsonages was 4,050, and the increase in value of parsonages was more than \$7,000,000. The receipts of the Missionary Society during the year 1820, the first year of its existence, when Matthew Simpson was a boy nine years old, were

\$823.04; the receipts in 1852, the year of his election to the episcopacy, were \$150,482.48; the receipts last year, 1883, were \$751,469.90. The number of missionaries, home and foreign, employed by the society in 1883 was 2,485; the ordained native preachers numbered 252, and the unordained native preachers 192. The total number of members in home and foreign mission fields was over 46,000; scholars in mission Sunday schools, 62,878; number of churches and other houses of worship, 1,281, valued at \$1,404,166. The whole of this gratifying missionary progress was accomplished within the working lifetime of Bishop Simpson. This church, which in 1811, the year of the bishop's birth, was without any educational institutions, in 1883 owned 92 classical seminaries and female colleges, 43 colleges and universities, and 9 theological schools; its students numbered over 26,000, and its educational property was valued at over \$7,400,000.

During this period of unexampled growth and prosperity, the labors, the devotion, the wisdom, and the eloquence of Bishop Simpson were unsurpassed by any chief minister among us. He was indeed a great man, tested by any standard of greatness which we may adopt. His intellectual powers were of the very highest quality, and he subjected them to the most constant, thorough, and exacting discipline throughout his whole life. His knowledge was extended and diversified, embracing in its wide sweep

the finest and most precious results of human investigation in almost every field, literature, history, science, philosophy, poetry, art, medicine, and theology. If superiority to adverse circumstances be a mark of greatness, Bishop Simpson was a great man. In a country like ours, where the accidents of birth and fortune count for little, it is a long, toilsome, and difficult road from the village academy to acknowledged leadership in church and state. Faith in the people, faith in their virtue, their honor, their capacity, their patience and steadfastness, their patriotic devotion and self-sacrifice, is usually esteemed a mark of greatness, and the faith of Matthew Simpson in the moral soundness of the American people never wavered for a single instant. It has been said that a great man is one who causes things to come to pass, who possesses the ability to effect results, who is able so to impress and move men so as to secure the accomplishment of his purposes. Then Bishop Simpson was a great man, for it is to be doubted if, since Francis Asbury, any man in Methodism effected a greater number of practical results than did he. He possessed great simplicity, purity, and humility of character. His integrity was open and manifest. The breath of suspicion never touched the whiteness of his soul. He was quick to perceive, slow to speak—a rare and happy combination. He had convictions, and the courage of them, and, withal, was modest, unpretending,

teachable, free from the least trace of vanity and self-seeking. He was careful and patient in coming to his conclusions, firm and inflexible in maintaining them. Every cause that proposed the enlightenment, the elevation, the virtue, the progress, the enfranchisement of men had his earnest sympathy and support. He was possessed of rare and admirable equipoise of character—a quality indicative of the very highest type of greatness. His greatness was distinctly of the ethical and spiritual order. He was a scholar, but he was more than a scholar; he was a writer, but he was more than a writer; he was an orator, but he was more than an orator; he was a thinker, but he was more than a thinker; he was a philosopher, but he was more than a philosopher. In his life work we are enabled clearly to see what we are so often forgetting, namely, the immeasurable superiority of character over mere intellectual gifts and acquirement. His mastery of men was chiefly due to the righteousness of his personal character. Integrity, character, essentially Christian manliness, all that we mean by the noble word “righteousness,” is, after all, the supreme element in human life. Nations and churches are made strong by its possession. Its decay is the precursor of weakness and cowardice, its absence is death. A nation is invincible that gives the supreme place to character, and the grand design of the gospel is to bring men to perfect manhood, unto the measure of



the stature of the fullness of Christ. What we *are*—not what we know, or what we have, or what we say, or what we believe—what we *are*, that determines our power and peace, by that we stand or fall, in this, and in all worlds.

In Bishop Simpson was seen the happy union of the most opposite qualities, the harmonious and perfect adjustment of intellectual characteristics usually deemed incomparable and antagonistic. He possessed in an eminent degree the fervid temperament, the quick, glancing fancy, the glowing and vivid imagination of the magnetic and irresistible orator; his blood was capable of the degree of heat necessary to the loftiest eloquence, and he was at the same time justly distinguished as an administrative and executive officer. He was patient, laborious, painstaking, thorough, giving careful attention to details, slurring no task, however insignificant, endowed with a vast capacity for work. His insight into human character was quick, accurate, and at times remarkable, and he was equally at home presiding over the Conferences, fixing the appointments of the preachers, inspiring and guiding the educational progress of the church, devising comprehensive measures for its future growth, quickening, and directing its missionary zeal and fervor. He was tried in various fields of exertion, each requiring for success the highest order of ability, and in every instance he was found equal to the work imposed upon him.

He was tried as a pastor and preacher in a strong city church at twenty-four years of age; he was tried as an instructor of youth, he was tried as the chief executive officer of a college, he was tried as an editor, he was tried as the confidential adviser of Abraham Lincoln, he was tried in all the delicate, multifarious, and arduous duties attaching to the episcopal office in Methodism, he was tried as an author, as a popular tribune, on the lecture platform, in the pulpit, and everywhere his success was clear, undisputed, conspicuous. The Methodist Episcopal Church has grown rapidly during the last half century, but it never outgrew Matthew Simpson. His wisdom in administration kept pace with the expansion and increasing complexity of the work of the church. He was never found in the rear of her progress. Instead of idly and weakly extolling the days and wisdom of the fathers, he steadily sought to comprehend and discharge the duties growing out of the changed and changing circumstances of our eager, pushing, progressive American life. The questions he asked were not, What were the duties of the fathers of Methodism? but, What are our duties, and, how may we best discharge them?

Bishop Simpson, in the language of a great newspaper, "adorned the episcopal office with gentleness, humility, and devotion." His piety was of the highest order—sincere, deep, unostentatious, calm, devoted. Under its influence he lived a blameless and

holy life, never giving the enemy occasion to blaspheme, and drawing thousands within the hallowed circle of his personal influence. His life was one of penitence, faith, and prayer, of profound spiritual aspiration, or deep and sanctifying communion with God, and his spirit was ever fragrant with the sweet odors of the skies. His conversation was in heaven. His life was hid with Christ in God. In manners he was gentle, attractive, courteous, approachable, dignified. The humblest and plainest were at home in his presence, and only the forward, the vain, the intrusive were ever rebuked by the firmness and decision which on occasion he was wont to call into vigorous exercise.

The throne of his peculiar and highest power was the pulpit. It is not meant to take aught from his honorable renown in other fields of activity, when the statement is made that his greatness culminated in the pulpit. It is not too much to say that Matthew Simpson, when on fitting occasions he was fully aroused, was the greatest preacher in American Methodism, and one of the greatest in all Christendom. His eloquence was undefinable and indescribable. It is true that he was simplicity itself in matter and manner, but simplicity was not the secret of his eloquence, for have we not heard many men who were fairly entitled to the credit of simplicity who, nevertheless, were far removed from eloquence? He was a remarkably fluent speaker, but have we

not long ago learned that mere fluency does not constitute eloquence? He was exact, accurate, clear, forcible in his style, but who does not know that one may be accurate, clear, energetic in his speech without being eloquent? He had a voice of peculiar and remarkable power, clear, distinct, penetrating, sympathetic, of great compass and sweep at times, but there have been not a few preachers with voices equal to his in every regard who have never, even by their closest friends, been suspected of eloquence. He was apt, felicitous, and rich in illustration, but there are many illustrative preachers who have never attained to the heights of eloquence. He was humble, conscientious, devout, prayerful, but how many humble, conscientious, devout, prayerful preachers of the gospel are there who have never felt the divine glow of eloquence? His eloquence—it was the high and sacred gift of God. It came to him without seeking or training. It came to him as the sunshine comes to the fields, as the breeze rustles the tall corn, as song comes to birds in spring, as fragrance comes to roses in June, as love is born in the hearts of lovers. He used his splendid gift right royally. He consecrated his glorious eloquence to the one great work of uttering forth the good news of the gospel, the riches of the divine love in Jesus Christ, the fullness and tenderness and preciousness of that grace which brings salvation to all men. Some of us have been the willing subjects of his superb pow-

ers, and long will the memory linger of the youthful days made bright and free and strong by the rare eloquence of Matthew Simpson! He touched our eyes, and we saw strange sights. He unstopped our ears, and it seemed to us that the angels' songs were not far away. He gave us wings, we rose, and breathed a purer air. He waved the magic wand of his resistless eloquence before us, and lo! the sordidness of our existence disappeared, life took on new shapes and higher dignity; we felt ourselves to be in very truth the sons of God.

Bishop Simpson was the friend, the inspirer, the guide, and the model of many noble and ingenuous youths. Thousands of strong and gifted men confess to-day with pride and joy that they derived from him the loftiest aims, the holiest impulses, the choicest inspirations of their lives. If, standing in this church, which by his office and ministry was solemnly dedicated to the worship of Almighty God, he should address the young men here present, what would he say? Speaking as a father would he not say: "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh when thou shalt say, I have not pleasure in them"? Should he speak as a teacher, would he not use these words: "Add to your faith virtue, and to virtue knowledge, and to knowledge self-control, and to self-control godliness, and to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly

kindness charity, for if these things be in you and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ"? If he spoke as a friend and brother, would he not say: "Prize above all earthly acquirements, above all material possessions, the wisdom that is from above, which is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruit, without wrangling, and without hypocrisy"? If he spoke as a patriot, would not these be his words:

"I charge thee, fling away ambition;  
By that sin fell the angels. How can man, then,  
The image of his Maker, hope to win by 't?  
Be just and fear not.  
Let all the ends thou aim'st at be thy country's,  
Thy God's, and truth's; then if thou fall'st,  
Thou fall'st a blessed martyr"?

If he spoke as a preacher of the gospel, would not this be his message: "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you"?

Matthew Simpson, born in Cadiz, Ohio, June 20, 1811, graduated in 1832, entered the Christian ministry in 1833, elected a bishop of the Methodist Episcopal Church in 1852, died in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, June 18, 1884. And is this all?

We cannot ascertain the quantity or the quality of a human life by statistics. We have not measured

or expressed a life when we can glibly repeat the dates of birth and marriage and death. If we have truly lived, the invisible, spiritual element has been abiding and potent. There is more of life than the cradle, the marriage altar, the workshop, and the grave. The life our great bishop lived erewhile it pleased God to take him, was a life that could not be expressed or measured by a few figures and other external data. The finest and divinest part of life is unseen, unheard, unknown of the world. It is lived in the deepest silence. Who shall fitly speak of his invisible, spiritual life? It is easy to tell when and where he was born, who his parents were, what schools he attended, when he entered the ministry, how many years he exercised his episcopate, when he married, and where he died. But of the dreams and hopes and plans of his early youth, of his internal wrestlings with doubt and fear, of the lonely sorrows the years brought to him, of the temptations he met, and faced, and conquered, of the entire sweep and complexion of his inner life, of the ministry of light and shadow in the subtle growth of his character, of his mysterious and solemn questionings in life's trial hours, of the silent battles he bravely fought as in the very presence of God, of these things it is not given us to speak. This we know, that they made up his real life, and if we may judge of the nature of the conflict by the results distinctly traceable in his character, he lived in all



good conscience before God, steadily refusing to serve the false and base, humbly and reverently drinking the cup his Father handed him, accepting with unfaltering loyalty of spirit the work God gave him to do. If we were masters of the art of instantaneous spiritual photography, we would see how, by God's grace, he kept his soul clean and white during all the years of his life struggle.

The departure hence of such a royally-endowed soul reminds us of the essential greatness and inherent dignity of the spirit of man. We are accustomed to extol the institutions founded by the wisdom of man. We admire his prowess, his daring, his sagacity, his mighty triumphs over nature in the air, on land and sea. We stand in wonder before the immortal productions of his genius, his cities, his industries, his commerce, his schools, his civilization, his philosophies, his literature, his arts, his music, his governments; his wonderful inventions amaze and charm us; but there is something greater than all these things, namely, man himself. Themistocles was greater than Athens, Columbus was greater than his ships, Bacon was greater than his philosophy, Milton was greater than his poems, Raphael was greater than his pictures, Beethoven was greater than his symphonies, Shakespeare was greater than "Lear" or "Hamlet," Wellington was greater than Waterloo, Lincoln was greater than the Presidency.

Greater than all beauty of art is the spirit of man, for whom and by whom all beauty of art is devised. The men who write constitutions for nations are greater than the constitutions they write. Greater than the work is the worker, greater than the deed is the doer, greater than the thought is the thinker, greater than the sacrifice is the offerer. There is here a greater than the temple. The spirit of man is the holiest altar of God. We know not all the agencies which wrought out the glorious character of our departed chief pastor. We cannot number the tools and instruments of his culture; we may not precisely calculate how he was quickened, colored, affected, and molded by this or that institution of human devising; we saw not the scaffolding that was employed in the erection of this spiritual temple of God. This we see distinctly and clearly, now that he is gone from us, that no agencies, no tools, no instruments, no scaffolding, no disciplines, nothing is as great as the immortal spirit. These perish and are forgotten; that is forever lustrous with the beauty of God.

Life increases in loneliness and mystery as we journey on. We set out with a great and joyous company, but the ranks are thinned as the years hurry by, and those who remain to walk at our side are not so light hearted as of yore. We listen for the sound of footfalls we shall never hear again. We strain our aching eyes, but the dear faces will

here shine upon us no more. We walk amid graves. The graves may be green, the flowers may be fragrant above them; but still they are graves, silent, lonely, mysterious. The shadows lengthen and the sun hastens to the west. With unresting feet we march to join the countless armies of the dead. The chill breath of night will soon calm our fevered brows, and we shall go to where all things are made plain. A choice spirit has left us. Whither has he gone? The shell of his splendid manhood is already confined for the grave! Where now is his knowledge, his faith, his conscience, his purity, his spiritual sentiments, his wealth of glorious faculty? Has nature, in a fit of impatience, stamped them out forever? What kind of a theory of life is that which condemns the most precious things to remediless destruction, and gives a wide sweep of being to gross, inanimate objects? Has the irreversible decree gone forth that choice, valorous, virtuous spirits are appointed to swift and complete ruin, while to rocks and hills and mountains belong millenniums of life? Shall we charge God with the incredible folly of richly endowing human spirits, and launching them on the dangerous sea of existence, knowing all the time that they will go down in darkness and blackness forever! Surely not! They reach a safe harbor. Their feet touch a golden shore. They behold the gleam of the City of Jasper and Pearl.

Let us believe

“That nothing walks with aimless feet:  
That not one life shall be destroyed,  
Or cast as rubbish to the void,  
When God hath made the pile complete.”

Let us believe that to him has been given

“A life that bears immortal fruit  
In such great offices as suit  
The full-grown energies of heaven.”

Let us believe that we shall greet, and be greeted  
by him in the eternal reunions of the skies, when,  
like him, we rest in the peace of God.

“Ashes to ashes, dust to dust;  
He is gone who seemed so great—  
Gone; but nothing can bereave him  
Of the force he made his own  
Being here, and we believe him  
Something far advanced in state,  
And that he wears a truer crown  
Than any wreath than man can weave him.  
But speak no more of his renown,  
Lay your earthly fancies down,  
And in the ‘silent city’ leave him.  
God accept him. Christ receive him.”

O! my father, hail and farewell!

## THE CREDIBILITY OF THE RESURRECTION

“He is not here; for he is risen, as he said.”—Matt. 28. 6.

“Wherefore comfort one another with these words.”—  
1 Thess. 4. 18.

THE death of Jesus was beheld, among others, by many women who had followed him from Galilee, and whose delight and joy it had been to minister to him. It is said that they beheld the crucifixion afar off—doubtless prevented by the crowd of spectators and the Roman guard, from a nearer approach to the Lord they loved. When Joseph of Arimathea, with many tears and some self-reproaches, had tenderly and reverently laid the body of Jesus in his new rock tomb, as he turned to go away he descried in the gathering darkness, directly opposite the grave, two silent, motionless female figures. “And there was Mary Magdalene, and the other Mary, sitting over against the sepulcher.” O, woman, sacred is the mystery of thy love and grief! Very early in the morning of the first day of the week, as, with the eager steps of love, they hastened to the grave with their spices and ointments, they were met by the angel of the Lord; his countenance shone like lightning, his raiment was white as snow, and for fear of him the keepers of the tomb did shake and become as dead men. Perplexed,

bewildered, affrighted, the trembling women hesitated and drew back until they heard the reassuring voice of the angel saying unto them: "Fear not ye; for I know that ye seek Jesus which was crucified; he is not here: for he is risen, as he said; come, see the place where the Lord lay."

These are great words, my friends. The triumph of Jesus over death is the pledge and the promise, the prophecy and the proof that we shall not be holden of his power, his defeat at this point is our defeat, and his victory is our victory. If death mastered him, we may be sure it will master us; if death was strong enough to put out forever the light of such a being as his, with a very light blow it can put out the light of our being forever. If he mastered death, we that are his shall master it, and because he lives we shall live also. If ever this corruptible shall put on incorruption, if ever this mortal shall put on immortality, if ever shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, "Death is swallowed up in victory," it will be because he lived, and died, and rose again, and, ascending on high, led captivity captive. Forasmuch then as the children were partakers of flesh and blood, he also, himself, likewise took part of the same, that by passing through the experience of death he might destroy him that had the power of death, and that he might deliver them who through the fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. It

is altogether fitting, therefore, that on this Easter Sunday morning, we should meditate upon the nature and the strength of the evidence of the great truth that Jesus Christ rose from the dead, to the end that our faith may be strengthened, that our courage may be replenished, that our hearts may be comforted, and that our love and devotion may be new-enkindled. In doing so, I beg you not to put yourselves into a jury box, and make me appear as a special pleader. This debate is not conducted by a hired advocate, appealing to a jury without any personal interest in the issue; it is not the speech of a representative of a political party to retainers and partisans; the discussion is not conducted for victory, but for truth; and it is in such a spirit of openmindedness that I would ask you to listen to the evidence of the resurrection of Jesus.

The first argument I derive from what is involved in a denial of the fact. Either he did, or he did not, rise from the dead. Let us take the latter hypothesis, and see what is involved in it. First, that converts into false witnesses the men of the New Testament; men like James, and Peter, and Matthew, and John, and Paul. The obvious consequence of a denial of the fact of the resurrection of Jesus Christ is the falsification of the testimony of the men who, under God, built the New Testament Scriptures. The next step is that it overthrows all the miracles reported in the New Testament, for any



course of reasoning, by which the miracle of the resurrection may be overthrown, will be found strong enough to overthrow all miracles. If there be found any criticism acute and penetrating enough to undermine the evidences upon which the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead is built, that criticism is strong enough to undermine the evidences upon which any miracle is built, and especially the miracles of the New Testament. In the next place, this theory of denial destroys the credibility of the New Testament. There is no doubt as to the attitude and teaching of the New Testament on the subject; the New Testament teaches us directly and positively, it stakes its very truthfulness on the affirmation that its chief Character rose from the dead, and if he did not rise from the dead it is an incredible book. But if you can destroy the miracles in the New Testament, if you can show that the New Testament is incredible, the task is an easy one to show the incredibility of the Old Testament and the impossibility of believing in its miracles; and the step is easy from this ground to a positive denial of the supernatural and miraculous in all religion. There remains but one step more, and that step lands you in absolute negation, in which it is declared that no revelation has ever been made, that no voice has ever come out of the everlasting silence, that there has been no objective supernatural disclosure to men of the will of God.

that we are to-day practically without God and without hope in the world. Paul was right when he said that if Christ had not risen we are yet in our sins. Apart from Christ, who knows what sin means? Who knows what life means? Who has any clue to any of the mysteries of being, the moment you overthrow the supernatural in religion, especially the supernatural in the religion of Jesus Christ. I repeat it, there is involved in the denial of the resurrection of Jesus, the denial of every miracle; there is involved in it the falsification of the testimony of such men as Peter, Paul, James, and John; there is involved in it the destruction of the credibility of the New Testament; there is involved in it the destruction of the credibility of the Old Testament; there is involved in it the denial of the idea of any revelation from God, and we are left in the world with nothing but the dim light of reason to govern us, and with nothing but the dim guesses of natural religion and instinct as to our future. The keystone of the Christian arch is the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead; take that out, and the entire arch falls. . . . Destroy that miracle and you have cut the capital nerve; Christianity is dead. Whoever is prepared for these consequences is sadly welcome to them. Whoever is prepared to deny this fact, with all that it logically involves, has undertaken, in order to get rid of the miracle of Jesus, to bring in the most violent and improbable suppo-

sitions. Which is more rational, which is more probable—the theory that God has spoken to us, or the theory that he has never spoken to us?

I derive an argument for the resurrection of Jesus from the calmness, the penetrating and convincing spirit of truthfulness, which pervades the New Testament. The New Testament is the book of the resurrection; it is the book that describes to us the manner of the resurrection, so far as the manner is given, and especially emphasizes for us the *fact*. What kind of a book is the New Testament? If it be not a reliable, credible book, it must have been designed and composed either by enthusiasts or impostors. By a religious enthusiast we mean to describe a man whose brain is excited, feverish, hot. The New Testament does not read as though it were the production of an enthusiast; it has been said by some one to be the calmest book in the language of man; there is nothing about it that is impatient, fanatical, feverish. Suppose they were not enthusiasts, but impostors: the New Testament has a certain quality (I would describe it by a sentence, because I am not able to describe it by a word), a certain quality of penetrating the mind of an ingenuous man with the sense that it was not gotten up or made to order, but that it is a simple, direct, straightforward narration of things that occurred. The New Testament is thoroughly permeated with this spirit of truthfulness, steeped in it, as it were, so that there is

no escape from the self-evidencing power of this calm, penetrating Book, and especially when men are in their best experiences and their most luminous hours, lifted above the thrall of the flesh and the world. From this Book that has this character of penetration and persuasion and conviction, I derive the argument that it is highly probable that this calm account of the resurrection is drawn from the life.

The character of Christ forbids the supposition that he was destroyed by death. It was remarked a few years ago by a very acute English essayist and critic, now deceased, that he had seen dogs at the summit, and men at the foot, of the great Saint Bernard in the same day, and on the basis of what they were (so far as he could discern) in capacity and power, he believed that the dogs at the top were better adapted to immortality, and more capable of it than the men at the bottom. There is a seed of truth in the criticism. It is in substance an equivalent to this statement; wealth of faculty demands proportionate growth, wealth of faculty demands commensurate destiny. When you see a simple tool you do not expect it to be put to any very high or significant uses, but when you find a complex tool or machine highly-wrought, finely organized, and evidently prepared with great skill and power, and at great expense, you expect it to be put to the highest uses, and to be carefully preserved for a long period of time. Now let us apply these thoughts,

beginning if you will, with the physical nature of man. Take some hideous, misshapen, shrunken hunchback—not a man in physical being, so much as a caricature on physical manhood, and look at him in death, and remember him as you knew him in life; then contrast with him, a man of noble, splendid, godlike form, a man of full height, a man with noble eyes, a man with a kingly carriage, a man who in his ordinary walk would attract the attention of the passer-by, as Webster is said to have done—and the very splendor of the temple of this man, as compared with the miserable proportions of the dwarf, will make you think that in any wisely-ordered universe this Apollo-like form ought, in some way or other, to be rescued from entire destruction. You rise then into the realm of the intellect; here is a man who has never learned to read, who has never been five miles from the mountain hut in which he was born and raised, a man who never saw a train of cars, who never saw a steamboat, who never saw more than two thousand people together, who never was in a town that contained more than eight or nine hundred inhabitants, a man full of superstition, besotted with ignorance, gross physicalness manacled his spirit; and then take a great, splendid intellect, without regard now to its moral qualities, a man of large and varied scholarship, a man ample in all knowledge, a man of drilled, whetted, disciplined, and implected faculties, a man

quick, fertile, nimble, creative in his imagination, a man of wide travel, a man who has read and digested the best books of the world—and in the presence of this man as compared with the other, the expectation begins to arise that such a man has too much in him to be destroyed. I rise higher now, and include the moral element, and contrast a man, a gambler, who so gambles as never to lose, who drinks, but so drinks as never to be intoxicated while he plays; a man who studies men, and has made a study of them for a quarter of a century, in order to induce them to gamble and drink and bet; a man who deliberately plans villany of the most wicked type: and then alongside of this man I place one who is rich and fine and reverent in his moral nature, who from his earliest boyhood has given himself to that which is noble and good and true and pure, who has cast out of him everything in him that was low, bestial, groveling, wicked, or fleshly, whose whole life has been one of cheerful and uncalculating sacrifice for others. And now, I say that in the presence of this latter man, our belief strengthens that he, and such as he, ought to survive death. You may begin to suspect in the case of the hunchback, that such a body as that might just as well be blotted out; but now when you come to the man who is Apollo-like in form, who is splendid in scholarship, in oratory, and in law, a man to whose sentences the United States Senate has listened with

delight, and when this man is one also who has laid down his life for others, who has not spoken bitter, malignant, and envenomed words of his political opponents, or of any other man, from whose lips, as judged by his fellow townsmen, no word has dropped in half a century, that dying he might wish to leave unspoken—I say that the idea of blotting such a being out is irrational, shocking, unethical.

O, great is man! As I listened the other evening at the concert, I thought of how music affected us; I thought of our capacity to be affected by eloquence; I thought of our capacity to be affected by objects of beauty in the natural world; I reflected on how emotion could fire us; I thought of how many-sided man was, of how he could be appealed to by so many different elements and forces, of how he could pray, and also of how he could curse, of how his imagination could take wings and fly to the uppermost heavens; I reflected how at the head of the charging squadron, the gallant McPherson could receive the bullet, and die with a smile; I reflected on what art and architecture and music and science and travel and scholarship and commerce and trade, could do for man, by whom, and for whom, they were all created, and the thought came to me with thrilling power, that was a great, a glorious, a magnificent being.

Now, with these thoughts, let us approach Him who is confessed to be the highest of all. Whatever



be the theory of his being, it is confessed by the most ultra-rationalistic and destructive critic, quite as freely as it is confessed by the most orthodox theologian, that whoever he was, from whatever source we seek to derive his being, Jesus of Nazareth was at the summit of earthly being. We know of no other being equal to him, there has never appeared on the earth, in human history, any being at all comparable to him. One of the strongest evidences alike of his super-humanity, and of the truth of the doctrine of evolution generally, is that the doctrine of evolution applied to him, fails to account for him; while the doctrine of evolution applied to other men will, and actually does, explain them. No doctrine of Jewish descent or antecedents, no doctrine of Palestinian environment explains Jesus of Nazareth. He is at the very apex of being, transcending in the quality of his nature, the best we can think and say. And so I declare that there is no stronger argument for his resurrection from the dead than the truth, that he was too great, too wise, too pure, too holy to be mastered by death: that it is a system of immoral logic which would seek to force us to the conclusion that in a universe like this a being like Christ could be absolutely and hopelessly crushed. If he was not crushed, he must have risen from the dead.

Consider again the value of the testimony of the original witnesses, especially that of Paul. These witnesses were competent; their testimony was not

hearsay testimony; they saw Jesus, they knew him, they companied with him for three years. It is true they were ignorant men, but ignorant men know their friends as well as scholastic men; it is true that these men were not learned in the ordinary sense of the word, but it is not at all likely that they were so ignorant as to mistake some other man for Jesus. Not only so, but their testimony is peculiarly and refreshingly frank; they openly confess that they did not believe it at first themselves, and when the women came to them, they said, "These things are idle tales." They delivered their testimony at the time and in the immediate neighborhood of where the circumstances were alleged to have occurred. The first testimony was not in Gaul or Spain; they did not leave the Asiatic continent and cross over to the European continent, and then go afar off to the Roman settlements in Spain, where the Roman soldiers were, and then declare that far away in Palestine a man had risen from the dead. Their first testimony was delivered in the immediate neighborhood of where the event was alleged to have occurred. "This thing was not done in a corner." It is to be borne in mind that they delivered their testimony at great cost; they could have saved their lives at any time by denying him; the burden of their preaching in the beginning was that he did rise from the dead, and hundreds of them died for this truth, when every man and woman of

them might have saved their lives by saying, "He did not rise; I did not see him."

Consider especially the testimony of the apostle Paul! He was not ignorant; he was born in the city of Tarsus, a city famous for its schools and culture. After he grew up he was sent to Jerusalem, where he was well trained in the Hebrew learning, having the wise and tolerant Gamaliel for his teacher. He was well versed also in the general learning of his time, and on Mars Hill he quoted from two Greek poets to the Greek philosophers themselves. One of the most destructive of the German critics confesses that such a man as Paul actually lived, and that he actually wrote five or six of the most significant epistles ascribed to him. This well born, ambitious, intellectual young man was exceedingly mad against the Christians; he was breathing out threatening and slaughter against them; he had witnessed the stoning of Stephen, and had arrested one after another of this way, and did it with joy and delight, and he was on his way to arrest the disciples in Damascus when, according to his own statement, Jesus revealed himself to him. Paul's constant statement was that he saw him; when the Judaizers were following after him, trying to turn the people away from following the great apostle and his teaching, Paul always settled the matter of his disputed apostleship by saying, "I saw the Lord." In the lesson read this morning he

declares that he saw him last of all "as one born out of due time." How do you explain such testimony as this? Paul was not ignorant; Paul was not unlettered; Paul was not superstitious; Paul was not an enthusiast (in the bad sense of that word); Paul was not an impostor. The idea that Paul was an impostor! Why, the very foundation of our morality and civilization are built on Paul after Christ!

Consider also as immensely strengthening the argument, the origin and the early victories of Christianity. Christianity must have had an origin. The word "Christianity" stands to-day for an obvious and significant fact. Go back to the last century, the eighteenth century, and there was something that answered to the word Christianity; go back to the seventeenth century, and there was something that answered to the word Christianity; and go back, century after century, until you reach the first century of this era—then, still you find something that suggests our modern word "Christianity"—little meetings of men and women, societies gathered here and there among the cities of the Roman empire, singing hymns to one *Christus*, whom they call a God, meeting at times in caves and secret places, and persecuted by the power of the Roman empire. How do you account for the origin of Christianity? How do you explain the fact of its actual appearance in the world? A law of our

minds requires us to seek an adequate and satisfactory origin of this great phenomenon called Christianity. You cannot explain it by the sword; there were no swords in the hands of these early Christians; you cannot explain it by asceticism, for the historical truth is that until after the third century the Christians were not ascetics; they had no literature, no wealth, no organization. How do you explain the fact that issuing from the narrow strip of territory between the river Jordan and the Mediterranean Sea, humble and plain people such as these went forth into the Roman empire, and succeeded in less than three centuries in making this really the dominant faith, so that in a short time thereafter it was adopted by a Roman emperor, either from conviction or policy. . . . Who were against them? The Jewish Pharisees, the Jewish Sadducees, the Egyptian workers in magic and necromancy, answering to our modern Spiritualists—these were all against them; the Greek polytheism was against them, the Roman emperors were against them, the rich patricians were against them, the besotted multitudes were against them, the venerable traditions of the past were against them; all the forces and elements you can imagine were arrayed against these humble men and women; and yet, beginning among the poor, the obscure, the slaves, preaching to them the great truths of the gospel, they finally conquered. How did they conquer?

By telling that a good man died in Palestine on the cross? Nay, but by telling that the man who died in Palestine on the cross, in three days rose from the dead, and became henceforth the Lord of life and love and glory. If this view is taken, it is easy to account for the origin of Christianity; if this view is not taken, there is no existing adequate explanation of the origin and the power of primitive Christianity.

We are to consider the force of the evidence derived from the facts of Christian experience. I go into a conference meeting of people gathered in a room in a building called a church; I seat myself quietly near the door and take close note of all that is going on. They sing a hymn, the man on the platform offers a prayer, after which they sing another hymn and he begins to talk about a certain person, Jesus by name, and after talking about him for five or ten minutes he takes his seat. The people present are silent for a few moments, when I see an elderly man rise; as I look at his face from where I am seated, it strikes me as a sincere face, not the face of a man of great intellectual power, perhaps, but an open, honest face, and he relates how this Jesus, some forty or fifty years ago, in response to an earnest appeal, gave him a sense of the forgiveness of his sins, and that in consequence of this fact he entered upon an experience of ever-deepening peace and joy. A woman rises and relates how this

same Jesus, in a time of great trouble and perplexity, had come to her invisibly, and supported and sustained her; a young man narrates how he had been led away into evil and dissolute courses, and that at a certain time, in a religious meeting, in response to his prayers, this Jesus had entered into his heart and life, so that he had become dissatisfied with this loose way of living and had entered upon a new and holy way of living. A number of like experiences follow; I get the names of the people, and go out into the neighborhood and ask if these people are people of ordinary truthfulness, and I am told that they are; that their testimony against a man charged with murder would be sufficient to convict him. I find that there are thousands and hundreds of thousands and millions of people testifying to the same things; I find that in the last century there were thousands, and hundreds of thousands, and millions testifying to the same things; and so I go back century by century, century by century, and find a great body of the best men and women that ever lived on the earth testifying to these things about Jesus. Are they all mistaken? Is it all imagination? Is it all a delusion? It is, indeed, all a delusion if he did not rise from the dead, but if he rose from the dead, and ascended on high, we have at once an easy and natural solution of all these otherwise inexplicable facts.

Gather up all these separate lines of thought, and



let them converge; reflect upon what is involved in a denial of his resurrection; reflect upon the truth-speaking character of the New Testament, how it penetrates you in your best hours as though it spoke the very truth; reflect on the value of the testimony of the original witnesses, and especially upon the value of the testimony of the apostle Paul; reflect upon the superiority of the character of Jesus, and how you are to explain that character if death destroyed it; remember that Christianity is in the world, and that therefore it must have had an origin, and that there is no adequate theory of its origin except the truth, that Jesus rose from the dead; remember the indisputable facts of Christian experience, and mark well that there is no explanation of such a widespread delusion among the strongest and purest men and women, of the strongest nations on the globe, unless there be a Jesus who rose from the dead and hears our prayers. Focalize these lines of light, and then I ask you on this Easter Sunday morning, which is more rational, the belief that the Pharisees triumphed when they put him to death on the cross, and that God, who permitted them to triumph, is thus himself an omnipotent Pharisee, or the doctrine that the Pharisees were wrong and that Jesus Christ was right, and that his Father is the eternal God, and that, therefore, he rose from the dead?

“Wherefore comfort one another with these

words." The apostle Peter must have been a strange man. If I should walk into the house of a friend and find there eight or ten people wringing their hands and crying and sobbing as though their hearts would break—if I should stride into the room and begin to sing the doxology, would they not think that I was a strange man? If I should go into a room where there were a number of people in daily expectation of dreadful calamities, calamities foretold by a prophet whose prescience had never before been wrong, and I should begin to sing a doxology, what a strange man they would think me to be! If I should go to some one of your houses sometimes, when death came to it, and should begin the solemn service by singing, "Praise God, from whom all blessings flow," would you not think that I was a strange man? But Peter, twenty-five years after the Lord was gone up on high, writing to people who were in great trouble, in heaviness from manifold temptations, writing to people who were poor and friendless, the majority of them slaves, writing to people who were to pass through still sorer and heavier trials, Peter begins this way: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away." And then in the context he declares that the trial of

their faith, which is more severe than the refining of gold in a furnace, shall be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ.

Many have gone out from us, and many more shall go. From some homes a little child: from others the maiden; from others the bright, spotless, radiant youth; and here the father, and there the mother, and now the strong man lies down in death, and now the patient wife gives her children into the hands of strangers. O! of that company with whom we set out in youth, the company that was with us in the old schoolhouse and on the playground, how many have fallen! As we journey on from year to year, others fall out of the ranks, and more and more we will find ourselves alone; and at last we, too, shall go hence and leave our places vacant. Beloved, comfort yourselves to-day with the thought, that because he mastered death we shall master death, that because he triumphed we shall triumph, that because he lives we shall live also. "Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory forever and ever! Amen!"

## THE THEISTIC BASIS OF IMMORTALITY

“For he is not a God of the dead, but of the living; for all live unto him.”—Luke 20. 38.

THE Sadducees were the rationalizing skeptics of Judaism. They rejected, as of divine authority, all the Old Testament except the Pentateuch, and denied the reality of the future life. They came to Jesus with their miserable, pettifogging question concerning the woman who had seven husbands, and supposed that they would be able to confound him, and put him to shame, by their inquiry as to whose she should be in the resurrection. He met and disposed of this question in two ways: first, by revealing that the marriage relationship is earthly, transitional, temporal, and that it shall not survive death. “And Jesus answering said unto them, The children of this world marry, and are given in marriage; but they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage. Neither can they die any more; for they are equal unto the angels; and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection.” He most conclusively, however, answered this and all similar objections proceeding from men holding their views, by solemnly emphasizing the character of God as

the *living* God: "Now that the dead are raised, even Moses showed at the bush, when he calleth the Lord the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. For he is not a God of the dead, but of the living; for all live unto him."

The Christian argument for the future life is not the one I mean to pursue to-night. The Christian argument for the life to come is the argument of faith and experience, and it is direct, vital, conclusive, and unanswerable to its joyous subjects. I do not understand the Scriptures at all, if they make the assurance of immortality to be the result of a reasoning process. The Scriptures teach that they shall be certain of immortality who have entered into the spiritual life of faith, that they shall be sure of their unbroken life in God who now live in God, and that the internal evidence of the spirit to its present union with the divine life is more than a prophecy—it is conclusive of the question of its everlasting participation in it. It does not weaken—on the contrary, it strengthens—the position of Christianity with reference to the great hereafter, if we also employ the probable argument, or the argument that is derived from the right use of our reason working upon the facts of human life.

It is my purpose to-night to meet on a common ground of sympathy for the hour, with one whom I would term a theist, a moral theist, but not a Christian, and to show him, if he be a reverent, thought-

ful, and candid man, that either he must go into atheism or accept the doctrine of immortality; that the doctrine of theism is incompatible with the doctrine of man's mortality; that the only ground upon which men can stand and maintain that death is annihilation is the ground of sheer materialism and atheism; and that he who maintains the existence of a personal God, with all that these words imply, is driven by that fact to the conclusion that the evidences on behalf of the future life are so overwhelming as to leave him without excuse. Suffer me to emphasize my position, for I do not wish to be misunderstood: I am supposed to be holding a friendly discussion, a discussion for truth, not for victory, with a devout and candid theist, or one who believes in the doctrine of the existence of a personal God. The assumption then is that there is a being who is the Author of the worlds, the Framer of our bodies, and the Father of our spirits; that this Being possesses sufficient power, wisdom, righteousness, justice, and love to account for the phenomena exhibited in human life. Now there are many men in our time who have reached, or, rather, who have fallen back to this position. Speaking to this class of men, I seek to adduce evidence of the truth that the doctrine of immortality has a strong theistic basis; that, given such a Divine Being, and reasoning upon the obvious facts of our nature and life, the conclusion must come home with peculiar force

to the open and ingenuous mind, that death does not hopelessly shatter and destroy our being.

First, there is a theistic basis for immortality involved in the significant trend of the universal law of development. I might have used the word evolution: either word will do in this case. The study of the phenomena of matter and of mind, by those who have given their lives to the investigation of such questions, shows that the law of creation is that things shall begin in the small and grow to the large, in the rough and grow to the fine: that complexity is not first in the order of being, but crudeness and simplicity; that matter lies at the basis, and that the trend of all development, of worlds, of plants, of animals, of men, is perpetually away from matter in its coarser and grosser manifestations, toward something subtler, finer, more complex, less sensuous, less palpable, less tangible, but none the less real. I will not attempt any continued drawing out of this argument as derived from the facts of astronomy, or from geology, or from zoölogy, or from any other of the sciences. I assume that you are aware that the general truth is that the first plant was simple in its organism, and that the highest plant is complexly organized. But what I wish particularly to emphasize is that the law of *human* development, or evolution, is now and has been in the ages past, from rudeness, crudeness, savageism, and barbarism, on toward the enlightenment and



refinement of civilization, from the life that is fed by the eyes, the ears, the tongue, the stomach, and the hands, to the life that is fed by thought, devotion, aspiration, truth, and duty.

It is immaterial for the present purpose which theory of the origin of man is adopted. There are two theories, that hitherto universally accepted in the realm of theology that man began a perfect being morally, and fell; and the now generally accepted hypothesis of science that he began as a savage, being developed from the animal—and it is immaterial in this issue which is accepted—for if man fell, the undoubted historical evidence is to the effect that after his fall he was a savage, and that the trend of all the centuries has been away from grossness and coarseness toward refinement, thought, and loftiness of spiritual aspiration.

And now, when I, with my imperfect knowledge of these great subjects, trace the hand of the Creator in the slow and patient evolution of the organism of the world, and of plants, and of animals, and lastly of man, and when I reach that door called Death, I say that the trend is to make me believe that evolution does not stop there, but goes on beyond, for there are as many reasons for continuing man in existence as there ever were to bring him into existence; yea, there are ten thousand more. Evolution, or development, whatever you choose to call it, if it be studied in reference to this universal

law, brings us up to the point where the law of continuity requires us to demand of the theistical evolutionist the grounds for his belief that death stops evolution. Rather let us hold to the New Testament theory of development, that life begins here and goes beyond. If it does not, if death ends all, if development ceases at the door of the grave, then I ask the theist to explain to me why his God should ordain development to proceed so far and no farther, who knows that death is the cessation of development?

The broken, partial, fragmentary, incomplete character of our life; the waste of glorious faculties, if death be an irreparable catastrophe, justify us in demanding another life. I speak reverently when I say that in the history of theological science we have reached a time when we may begin to talk about the rights of the creature. It is not true, as it has sometimes been baldly stated, that because God made me he can do as he pleases with me. If so, he is not an ethical God. If he may do as he pleases with me because he is stronger than I am, then I may do as I please with a cripple because I can crush him. The creature has moral rights. It is a fact not to be disputed that man, brought into existence as he has been, with such a nature as he unquestionably possesses, has certainly some right to inquire as to the meaning of his being. Irreverent thus to inquire! Why, then, did Abraham,

praying to God, say: "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" Was he in doubt as to whether God would do right? Did not the prophet Jeremiah say: "Righteous art thou altogether, O Lord, yet let me talk with thee concerning thy judgments: wherefore do the wicked prosper?" Certainly in the development of Christianity and in our study of God we have reached that place where we may reverently ask, being brought here as we are, on conditions we never chose, with natures we did not select—whether we, too, in the sight of our Father, have not some rights.

The first right we have is a fair chance to come to ourselves, and to our best selves. God guarantees that right to a fly; a fly comes to itself; all there is in its nature is permitted to come out; but a man does not come to himself here. The majority of men, an overwhelming majority of men, have scarcely any idea of the potent and splendid faculties slumbering in them. And shall God bring out all that is in an insect, that flits about for an hour in the summer twilight, and then to the best and loftiest being he has ever made, the being to whom he gave the dominion of the world, and whom he has crowned with glory and honor, shall he give him no chance to come to himself? And yet Sir Isaac Newton, when he was an old man, said he did not know how he appeared to other people, but to himself he seemed like a little child picking up a few pebbles

of truth here and there upon the shore, while the great ocean of truth lay unexplored before him. I go down to see a great shipbuilder, and when he has his splendid vessel all ready to launch, I ask permission to go over it, and he explains it all to me, and shows me its various parts; it is magnificently fitted up, and while I am looking at the vessel I see servants, almost an army of them, carrying heavy burdens on board. "What is in that burden?" I ask. "Gold," is the reply. "What is in that casket?" "Jewels of value which cannot be estimated." "Where goes the ship?" "It sinks in midocean." "After you are so careful to fashion it, and load it with the most precious cargo, you take her out and she goes down in midocean, cargo and all?" "Yes, sir." "And you continue to make ships and freight them in this way, knowing all the time that every one of them will be lost?" "Yes, sir." Would he not be a strange shipbuilder? And do you think God would make such a being as man, endow him as he has endowed him, fill him with such a wealth of faculty, knowing that every man would come to wreck and ruin? What kind of a God is that? I am dealing to-night with the theist, a man who believes in the existence of God and questions the reality of revelation and immortality. How do you reconcile such a theory of life as that with your idea of God? Does it not impugn his wisdom? Would it not impugn the wisdom of a shipbuilder

to make ships this way and give them such a cargo, knowing that every one of them would be lost? And will God populate the globe as he does, will God keep up this great strife of human existence as he does, and then sweep us all out at last into Lethean darkness? Never! The theist must accept immortality or deny God.

Consider the failure of justice in this world. I do not say the "apparent" failure of justice; that is too cheap a way to face the facts of human life. I pass on the streets a woman sixty years of age, who makes her living by washing. She is carrying home from the late market the cheap food she was able to buy after the wealthy had made their selections, and she is now going to her humble home. She has lived a pure, blameless, prayerful Christian life. She had one son, and she reared him in goodness, in kindness, in patience, with a great wealth of love—and he is a murderer! And I pass on the next block—or, rather, he passes me in his carriage—a man worth a million and a half of dollars, made in the wholesale liquor business, and his son is in Congress, and he has not attended a church, or offered a prayer, for a score of years. Now, let them both be smitten with lightning, and I tell you it would have been better for that woman if she had never been born if there is no hereafter. Now, that is not apparent injustice. On the theory of mortality, on the theory that death irreparably destroys that which

we call our being, then I declare, not that that woman has been treated with apparent injustice, but with *absolute* injustice, for she has done right through her whole life up to the best light she had, and there is her reward! And on the theory that God has in him the ethical element as the supreme element in his nature, righteousness blossoming into love; on the theory that there is back of every man and woman a personal Moral Ruler—on this theory we *must* accept immortality or be driven into atheism. Let the theist who denies revelation and immortality, square this class of facts with the righteousness of God. I see a young man, the graduate of a college, the child of many prayers, the youth of many noble ambitions, wasting away with consumption. I stand by him as he goes out into the shadows and hear his last words, and over his open grave I read the words of comfort the church puts into my mouth. Living in the same town in splendid health, boasting that for thirty years he had never lost an hour from ill health, is a man who strives by every means to induce the college students to gamble with him, and he always wins. He studies the passions and appetites of untried and callow youths, and employs bad men and worse women to ruin them; and he lives on in comfort, in health, in local political power, lives on to decide in a nominating convention which of two men shall represent his state in the United States

Senate; and over against the grave of the young, ingenuous, brave, chivalrous man I place this villain—and then you tell me that there is no hereafter, that God permits this kind of a man to live, and that kind of a man to die and come to naught! There is no morality in your logic. The only atheist I ever knew, and I think he was cured of it before he died, was a man who was kind enough to invite me to spend a summer with him in his cottage, on the coast of Massachusetts, and gave me my first view of the sea. As we walked along the beach one day, he said: "If I was your God, I would have made this sea so that when missionaries went abroad it would never allow them or their ship to sink, and I would have so made it that when robbers and murderers are on it, it would swallow them up; but it knows neither missionary or robber." He was right if this life be all. Either God must give us a life to come, either the inequalities of the present life must be redressed and compensated for hereafter, or, as my mind is constituted, I see no sufficient evidence of a Moral Ruler of the universe.

The cruelty and deceit involved in our deep and indestructible longing for a better life, if death destroys us, must drive the theist into atheism, or into a belief in immortality. Now, I do not mean to argue from the yearning to the reality to-night; I mean simply to emphasize the fact of the yearning. Have you ever met a man who did not desire immor-



talities? You may have met men who denied it, you may have met men who doubted it, but I never met a man who did not desire it. I spent a whole night once with a man who doubted it, and as we bade each other good-bye in the morning I asked him, "Would not you be glad if it was so?" And I never saw tears in his eyes but that once, and his answer was in his tears. Would not you be glad if it was so? The yearning is deep and indestructible in us all. Why this yearning on the theory of mortality? This yearning is not necessary for the purposes of the present life. I take the theist on his ground of a personal God of righteousness, justice, equity, and holiness, and he will certainly confess that this yearning is known to God, and he must confess, if he be a man at all given to logical reasoning, that this yearning in us has its remote ultimate cause in God, as the Creator of our being. For the purposes of the present life, I repeat, we do not need it; and yet we have it. Now, why? Why does God, knowing, as he does and must know, that we possess it by all manner of promises and by all manner of revelations that come to us from nature and life—why does he fan it until at last it becomes a perfect flame of desire? You would never treat your child so. You cannot imagine the basest man you ever knew treating his child so; you cannot imagine a father who would take a child and begin to create in its heart a desire which the father knew at the

time he never could fulfill, or intended to fulfill, and then through all the years of life feeding that desire, and feeding it, and feeding it, until at last in some emergency in the child's life it would come to its father and ask for that for which he had created the desire, and then the father would step back and say: "It shall not be yours," and with one blow strike him dead. And yet you ask me to believe that God, my Father, created me with this yearning and desire, and then at last that which we call Death shall step in and rob me of existence, with the full knowledge and consent of God! Why seek to evade the force of all this by telling me that I shall not know that I was cheated? God forbid that I should defend *him* so? *He* knows we are being cheated. I may not know it, but he knows it, and whatever happens to the idea of God, the righteousness of Jehovah must be left whole and sound; but there is no righteousness if God makes us to desire immortality, and then cheats and deceives us by destroying us.

If extinction be the end of our life and work, then our faculties, and our best faculties, were made on purpose to deceive us. Man has orders and ranges of faculties, he has rank above rank of capacities and powers. The lowest faculties a man has never suggest immortality; nothing that is in our power to eat food suggests immortality; nothing physical about us suggests it, and Bishop Foster was right

when he said that the body is a mere accident, and that we will drop it at the grave and have no more to do with it. There is nothing in the body that suggests immortality; there is nothing in mine, that I want to be immortal, that I have found out yet. Then when you rise into the region of the intellectual faculties, the first is perception, but there is nothing in the mere mental act of perception that suggests immortality. But when you rise higher, to the social faculties or appetencies of our nature, they begin to suggest a perfect and eternal society; you rise higher, to the reasoning or intuitive faculties, and they more and more prophesy it; you rise into the realm of conscience, and it prophesies it with tremendous power; you rise into the region of spiritual instinct, faith, worship, aspiration, and immortality, on some bright and glorious days, is like the clear outshining of the sun. The best faculties of our being, and the finest experiences of our life, suggest immortality; but the lowest do not. The day that a man makes a false entry in a book he does not think of immortality unless conscience comes to lash him; the night that a man has been a beast is not the night the stars suggest a home beyond them; not when you are gross, and vile, and dishonest, and selfish, and greedy, does immortality appear reasonable; but on the days when you are honest, when you are clean, when you are patient, when you are sympathetic and brotherly, when

you are true, when you are worshipful—then it is that immortality is supremely reasonable. And now, what are we to think of One who would so make us as that the best faculties we have are unreliable? for if there be no immortality, then the verdict of our best faculties in their purest hours is a false one. Let me be misled by what I taste, let me be misled by the sight of my eyes when I behold the mirage on the desert, let me be misled by the hearing of my ears; but let me never be misled by conscience, and reason, and faith, for then the best I have was made to lead me wrong. Who can believe that? Who can believe that? And yet that is the position of the theist who denies immortality.

You call this a probable argument, but if I had presented here an argument with the same degree of probability, to the effect that there was a large diamond mine of untold wealth within two miles of Brooklyn, four fifths of the men in this congregation would be hunting for it to-morrow morning as soon as they could see! If I could only convince the men here to-night, and the crowds in New York and Brooklyn, that there was a large diamond mine, rich in the most costly diamonds, within two miles of Brooklyn, it would require all the policemen of the two cities to keep them from trampling each other to death in their hunt for the treasure. A probable argument! And if there was as probable an argument that you would be smitten with a dreadful dis-

ease in a few weeks, every one of you would see your family physician before you went to bed to-night. A probable argument! And if there was as probable an argument that you would get a fortune by going to Omaha and living there for five or six years, those of you who are not rich would be on the first train to Omaha to-morrow morning. And yet, with this same degree of probability, how many of you will go away from this place and these thoughts calmly reasoning about it, wondering after all whether it be true! You would not treat diamonds that way. Will you do more for diamonds than for your priceless spirit?

Brother men, if I had no other arguments than these, I might fairly exhort you to live worthy of your immortality; but I have another argument, the argument from experience, and with that will conclude all I have to say to-night. It is this: that after many struggles, that after standing over graves that hid for me the choice, the noble, the brave, the true, that after much reading and some reflection, that after many lonely, doubtful, and despairing hours, when I was alone with the problem of my nature, my work, and my destiny, I have found in the Christ life within an evidence of my immortality which makes it more real to me than the life I am now living, which makes death but the beginning of our life, which makes this world seem to me as a small room, in which we children are playing, and know

not how to leave it. Yonder is a door which leads out to the light beyond, and we are afraid to put our hands on the knob ; but I have learned that when, despite our fears, and prayers, and tears, the door must open, our true eternal life shall begin to be. "For I *know* whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day." "For I *know* that if my earthly house of this tabernacle be dissolved, I have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."











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